

# FAITH AND FREEDOM *(Oxford)*



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PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

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# FAITH AND FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF PROGRESSIVE RELIGION

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# 456330 *Psychoanalysis, Existentialism and Theology*

PAUL TILLICH

THE older I become, the more I feel obliged to make a semantic introduction—a very short one, but a very necessary one. I shall be using the two words, psychoanalysis and theology. By their very nature they pose semantic problems for us. We have to state what we mean by these two words before we talk about their relations. Psychoanalysis can be a special term, and it is often usurped by the Freudian school, which declares that no other school has a right to use the term psychoanalysis. I remember a talk I had with a representative of this school a few weeks ago at a dinner party. We talked very cordially with each other up to the moment when I called people like Horney, Fromm, Jung, Rank and other psychoanalysts. At this moment she broke in and said, “They are dishonest in calling themselves psychoanalysts. They shouldn’t do it. They do it only for purposes of profit.” There I got angry.

This situation shows that we have to do something about this term. If I use the term here, I will use it not as this lady psychoanalyst did but in the meaning into which this term has been transformed and enlarged during the last half-century. These developments surely are dependent on the basic Freudian discovery, namely, the role of the unconscious. However, I believe two other words which indicate something about the matter itself can be used here. “Therapeutic psychology” is one of the terms often used. Another term is “depth psychology.”

About the term “theology” I want to make only one short remark. What theology is cannot be the subject of this lecture, it must be presupposed. Perhaps many of you know that in our theological seminaries and divinity schools, the word “theology” often is used exclusively for systematic theology, and that historical and practical theology are not considered theology at all. With respect to our topic, I wish to enlarge the concept of theology for our discussion of its relationship to depth psychology; I wish to include in it past religious movements and great religious figures, and also the New Testament writings. On the other hand I want to include practical theology where the relationship to psychoanalysis has become most conspicuous, namely, in the function of the counsellor who gives counsel in religious and in psychoanalytic terms at the same time.

I was asked to fill a gap that has developed, namely, a treatment of existentialism in relation to psychoanalysis. This is a real gap, because I take existentialism in a much broader sense than it was taken a few years after the Second World War here in America.



At that time existentialism was identified with the philosophy of Sartre. But existentialism is a much larger movement, and it has many predecessors. It appears in decisive forms early in the 17th and in the 19th centuries, and it is incorporated in almost all great creations in all areas of life in the 20th century. If you understand existentialism in this broader sense, it suggests very definitely a relationship between existentialism and psychoanalysis. I would not have accepted this additional assignment, if I had thought that it was an additional assignment. But it is not, because a basic assertion I intend to make about the relationship of theology and psychoanalysis is that psychoanalysis belongs fundamentally to the whole existentialist movement of the 20th century, and that as a part of this movement it must be understood in its relationship to theology in the same way in which the relationship of existentialism generally must be understood. Thus the enlargement of my subject is not really an addition, but is something that in any event involves the problem of the relations between psychoanalysis and theology.

This factor to which I refer is very revealing for the whole situation. It reveals something about the philosophical implications of depth psychology, and also about the interdependence between this movement and the existentialist movement of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is a fact that psychoanalysis and existentialism have been connected with each other from the very beginning; they have mutually influenced each other in the most radical and profound ways. Everybody who has looked into the works of existentialist writers from Dostoyevsky on to the present, will immediately agree that there is much depth-psychological material in the novels, the dramas, and the poems, as well as in the visual arts—modern art is the existentialist form of visual art. All this is understandable only if we see that there is a common root and intention in existentialism and psychoanalysis.

If these common roots are found, and I will try to give at least some hint about them, the question of the relationship of psychoanalysis and theology is brought into a larger and more fundamental framework. Then it is possible to reject the attempts of some theologians and some psychologists to divide these two realms carefully and give to each of them a special sphere; it is then possible to disregard those people who tell us to stay in this or that field: here a system of theological doctrines and there a congeries of psychological insights. This is not so. The relationship is not one of existing alongside each other; it is a relationship of mutual interpenetration, and the analysis of this mutual interpenetration is the great problem to which I have to address myself.

Let me first give you something that may tax your patience, namely, a historical view of the common roots of existentialism in general and of psychoanalysis in particular. One can say that the common root is the protest against the increasing power of the philosophy of consciousness in modern industrial society. This

conflict between the philosophy of consciousness and the protest against it is of course much older than modern industrial society. It appeared already in the 13th century in the famous conflict between the primacy of the intellect in Thomas Aquinas and the primacy of the irrational will in Duns Scotus. Both of these men were theologians, and I mention them mainly in order to show how untenable theological positions are which want to exclude philosophical and psychological problems from theology. The struggle between these two basic attitudes towards not only the nature of man but also the nature of God and the world has continued ever since. In the Renaissance, we have philosophers of consciousness, for instance, humanists of the type of Erasmus of Rotterdam or scientists of the type of Galileo, but against them stood others, as for instance Paracelsus in the realm of medical philosophy who fought against the anatomical mechanisation of medicine and against the separation of body and mind, of Jacob Boehme, who influenced the subsequent period very much, particularly by his description in mythological terms of the unconscious elements in the ground of the divine life itself and therefore of all life. We find the same conflict in the Reformation: on the one hand the victory of consciousness in reformers like Melanchthon, Zwingli, and Calvin, all of them dependent on humanists of the Erasmus type, while the irrational will was emphasised by Luther, on whom Jacob Boehme was largely dependent. The history of industrial society, the end of which we are experiencing, represents the history of the victory of the philosophy of consciousness over the philosophy of the unconscious, irrational will. The symbolic name for the complete victory of the philosophy of consciousness is René Descartes; and the victory became complete, even in religion, at the moment when Protestant theology became the ally of the Cartesian emphasis on man as pure consciousness on the one hand, and a mechanical process called body on the other hand. In Lutheranism it was especially the cognitive side of man's consciousness which overwhelmed the early Luther's understanding of the irrational will. In Calvin it was the moral consciousness, the moral self-controlling centre of consciousness that predominated. We have in America, which is mostly dependent on Calvinism and related outlooks, the moralistic and oppressive types of Protestantism which are the result of the complete victory of the philosophy of consciousness in modern Protestantism. But in spite of this victory, the protest was not silenced.

Pascal in the 17th century stood in conscious opposition to Descartes. His was the first existentialist analysis of the human situation, and he described it in ways very similar to those of later existentialist and non-existentialist philosophers, that is, in terms of anxiety, of finitude, of doubt, of guilt, of meaninglessness, of a world in which Newtonian atoms and cosmic bodies move according to mechanical laws; and, as we know from many utterances, man



decentralised, deprived of the earth as centre, felt completely lost in this mechanised universe, in anxiety and meaninglessness. There were others in the 18th century; for example, Hamann, who is very little known outside of Germany, a kind of prophetic spirit anticipating many of the existentialist ideas. But most radical became the protest at the moment when the philosophy of consciousness reached its peak in the philosophy of Hegel. Against this victorious philosophy of consciousness Schelling arose, giving to Kierkegaard and many others the basic concepts of existentialism; then Schopenhauer's irrational will, Hartmann's philosophy of the unconscious, Nietzsche's analysis which anticipated most of the results of later depth-psychological inquiries. The protest appeared also in Kierkegaard's and Marx's description of the human predicament, in finitude, estrangement, and loss of subjectivity. And in Dostoyevsky we find the description of the demonic subconscious in man; we find it also in French poetry of the type of Rimbaud and Baudelaire. This was the preparation of the ground for what was to follow in the 20th century.

All the things which in these men were ontological intuition or theological analysis now through Freud became methodological scientific words. Freud, in his discovery of the unconscious, rediscovered something that was known long since, and had been used for many decades and even centuries to fight the victorious philosophy of consciousness. What Freud did was to give to all of this protest a scientific methodological foundation. In him we must see the old protest against the philosophy of consciousness. Especially in men like Heidegger and Sartre, and in the whole literature and art of the 20th century, the existentialist point of view became aware of itself. It now was expressed intentionally and directly, and not only as a suppressed element of protest.

This short survey shows the inseparability of depth psychology from philosophy, and of both of them from theology. It is also clear that they cannot be separated if we now compare depth psychology and existentialist philosophy in their differences and their identity. The basic point is that both existentialism and depth psychology are interested in the description of man's existential predicament—in time and space, in finitude and estrangement—in contrast to man's essential nature; for if you speak of man's existential predicament as opposite to his essential nature, you must in some way presuppose an idea of his essential nature. But this is not the purpose to which all existentialist literature is directed. Instead, the focus in both existentialism and depth psychology is man's estranged existence, the characteristics and symptoms of this estrangement, and the conditions of existence in time and space. The term "therapeutic psychology" shows clearly that here something that contradicts the norm, that must be healed, is expressed. It shows the relation between disease—mental, bodily, or psychosomatic disease—and man's existential predicament.

It is also clear that all existential utterances deal with the boundary line between healthy and sick and ask one question—you can reduce it to this—how is it possible that a being has a structure that produces psychosomatic diseases? Existentialism in order to answer these questions points to the possible experience of meaninglessness, to the continuous experience of loneliness, to the widespread feeling of emptiness. It derives them from finitude, from the awareness of finitude which is anxiety; it derives them from estrangement from oneself and one's world. It points to the possibility and the danger of freedom, and to the threat of non-being in all respects—from death to guilt. All these are characteristic of man's existential predicament, and in this, depth psychology and existentialism agree.

However, there is a basic difference between them. Existentialism as philosophy speaks of the universal human situation, which refers to everybody, healthy or sick. Depth psychology points to the ways in which people try to escape the situation by fleeing into neurosis and falling into psychosis. In existentialist literature, not only in novels and poems and dramas but even in philosophy, it is difficult to distinguish clearly the boundary line between man's universal existential situation based on finitude and estrangement on the one hand, and man's psychosomatic disease which is considered an attempt to escape this situation and its anxieties by fleeing into a mental fortress. Now we can approach better and with much more foundation the question of the relation of theology to depth psychology and to existentialism.

Let me say a few words about some theological judgments concerning these two forms, depth psychology and existentialism, which are in reality one thing. The relation between man's essential nature and his existential predicament is the first and basic question that theology has asked, wherever it encounters existentialist analyses and psychoanalytic material. In the Christian tradition, there are three fundamental concepts. First: *Esse qua esse bonum est*. This Latin phrase is a basic dogma of Christianity. It means "Being as being is good," or in the Biblical mythological form: God saw everything that he had created, and behold, it was good. The second statement is the universal fall—fall meaning the transition from this essential goodness into existential estrangement from oneself, which happens in every living being and in every time. Then the third, the possibility of salvation. At this point I want to remind you that salvation is derived from *salvus* or *salus* in Latin, which means "healed" or "whole," as opposed to disruptiveness. These three considerations of human nature are present in all genuine theological thinking. Essential goodness, existential estrangement, and the possibility of something, a "third," beyond essence and existence, through which the cleavage is overcome and healed. Now, in philosophical terms, this means that man's essential and existential nature points to his teleological nature (derived from *telos*, aim, that for which and towards which his life drives).



If you do not distinguish these three elements, which are always present in man, you will fall into innumerable confusions. Every criticism of existentialism and psychoanalysis on the basis of this tripartite view of human nature is directed against the confusion of these three fundamental elements, which always must be distinguished although they always are together in all of us. Freud, in this respect, had an unclearly ambiguous attitude, namely, he was not able and willing to distinguish man's essential and his existential nature. And this is my basic criticism, not of any special result of his thinking, but of his doctrine of man and the central intuition he has of man. His libido makes this deficiency very obvious. Man, according to him, has infinite libido, which never can be satisfied and which therefore produces the desire to get rid of oneself, the desire he has called the death instinct.

And this is not only true of the individual, it is also true of man's relation to culture as a whole. His dismay about culture shows that he is very consistent in his negative judgments about man as existentially distorted. If you see man only from the point of view of existence and not from the point of view of essence, only from the point of view of estrangement and not from the point of view of essential goodness, then this consequence is unavoidable. And it is true for Freud in this respect.

Let me make this clear by means of a theological concept which is very old, the classical concept of concupiscence. This concept is used in Christian theology exactly as libido is used by Freud, but it is used for man under the conditions of existence; it is the indefinite striving beyond any given satisfaction, to induce satisfaction beyond the given one. But according to theological doctrine, man in his essential goodness is not in the state of concupiscence or indefinite libido, rather he is directed to a definite special subject, to content, to somebody, to something with which he is connected in love, or *eros*, or *agape*, whatever it may be. If this is the case, then the situation is quite different. Then you can have libido, but the fulfilled libido is real fulfilment; and you are not driven beyond this indefinitely. That means Freud's description of libido is to be viewed theologically as the description of man in his existential self-estrangement. But Freud does not know any other man, and this is the basic criticism that I would weight against him on this point.

Now, fortunately, Freud, like most great men, was not consistent. With respect to the healing process, he knew something about the healed man, man in the third form, teleological man. And insofar as he was thus convinced of the possibility of healing, this contradicted profoundly his fundamental restriction to existential man. In popular terms, his pessimism about the nature of man and his optimism about possibilities of healing never have been reconciled in him or in anybody of his school of whom I know or with whom I have talked. But some of his followers have done something



else. They have rejected the profound insight of Freud about existential libido and the death instinct. And in so doing they have, in my opinion, reduced and cut off from Freud what made him and still makes him the most profound of all the depth psychologists. I say this even in relation to Jung, who is much more religiously interested than was Freud, but in spite of this fact I stick to Freud in this point. I think he saw, theologically speaking, more about human nature than all his followers who, when they more and more lost the existentialist element in Freud, went more to an essentialist and optimistic view of man.

We can make the same criticism of Sartre's pure existentialism and fine psychological analysis (to which I want to direct your attention whenever there is a chance to do it). This is the greatness of this man. He is the psychological interpreter of Heidegger. He is perhaps misinterpreted on many points, but nevertheless his psychological insights are profound. And here we have the same thing that we have found before: Sartre says man's essence is his existence. In saying this he makes it impossible for man to be saved or to be healed. Sartre knows this, and every one of his plays shows this too. But here also we have a happy inconsistency. He calls his existentialism humanism. But if he calls it humanism, that means he has an idea of what man essentially is, and he must consider the possibility that the essential being of man, his freedom, might be lost. And if this is a possibility, then he makes, against his own will, the difference between man as he essentially is and man as he can be lost, the very essence of man, namely, to be free and to create himself. We have the same problem in Heidegger. Heidegger talks also as if there were no norms whatsoever, no essential man, as if man makes himself. On the other hand, he speaks of the difference between authentic existence and unauthentic existence. "Authentic" here means what man truly should be, having the courage to be himself; and on the other hand, we have unauthentic existence, falling into the average existence of conventional thought and nonsense—into an existence where he has lost himself. This is very interesting, because it shows that even the most radical existentialist, if he wants to say something, necessarily falls back to some essentialist statements because without them he cannot even speak up.

Other psychoanalysts have described the human situation as correctible and amendable, as a weakness only. The tragic element we have in genuine existentialism and in Freudianism. And my great and wonderful friend, Karen Horney, was very much against the existentialist implication of Freud and of myself as a theological existentialist, and we often fought about the question: Is man essentially healthy? If he is, only his basic anxiety has to be taken away; for example, if you save him from the evil influences of society, of competition and things like that, everything will be all right. Men like Fromm speak of the possibility of becoming an autonomous

non-authoritarian personality who develops himself according to reason. And even Jung, who knows so much about the depths of the human soul and about the religious symbols, thinks that there are essential structures in the human soul and that it is possible (and one may be successful) to search for personality.

In all these representatives of contemporary depth psychology I miss the depths of Freud. I miss the feeling for the irrational element that we have in Freud and in much of the existentialist literature. I have already mentioned Dostoyevsky, I can mention Kafka and many others.

Now I come to the third element, namely, the teleological, the element of fulfilment, the question of healing. Here we have the difference between the healing of an acute illness and the healing of the existential presuppositions of every disease and of every healthy existence. This is the basis for the healing of special acute illnesses; on this all groups agree. There are acute illnesses that produce psychosomatic irregularities and destruction. There are compulsive restrictions of man's potentialities which lead to neurosis and eventually to psychosis. But beyond this there are the existential presuppositions. I would say that neither Freudianism nor any purely existentialist consideration can heal these fundamental presuppositions. Many psychoanalysts try to do it; they try with their methods to overcome the existential negativity, anxiety, estrangement, meaninglessness, guilt. They deny that they are universal, that they are existential in this sense. They call all anxiety, all guilt, all emptiness, illness which can be overcome as any illness can be, and they try to remove them. But this is impossible. The existential structures cannot be healed by the most refined techniques. They are objects of salvation. The analyst can be an instrument of salvation as every friend, every parent, every child can be an instrument of salvation. But as analyst he cannot bring salvation by means of his medical methods, for this requires the healing of the centre of the personality. So much for the criticism.

Now at the end I would like to talk about the way in which theology must deal with depth psychology. Let me first say that I believe that the growth of these two movements, existentialism and depth psychology, is of infinite value for theology. Both of them brought to theology something which it always should have known but which it had forgotten and covered up. They helped to re-discover the immense depth psychological material which we find in the religious literature of the last two thousand years and even beyond that. Almost every insight concerning the movement of the soul can be found in this literature, and the most classical example of all is perhaps Dante's Divine Comedy, especially in the description of hell and purgatory, and of the inner self-destructiveness of man in his estrangement from his essential being.

Second, it was a re-discovery of the meaning of the word "sin" which had become entirely unintelligible by the identification of



sin with sins and by the identification of sins with certain acts that are not conventional or not approvable, and by calling these things "sin." Sin is something quite different. It is universal, tragic estrangement, based on freedom and destiny in all human beings, and should never be used in the plural. Sin is separation, estrangement from one's essential being. That is what it means; and if this is the result of depth psychological work, then this of course is a great gift that depth psychology and existentialism have offered to theology.

And third, depth psychology has helped theology to re-discover the demonic structures that determine our consciousness and our decisions. Again, this is very important. It means that if we believe we are free in terms of conscious decision, we can find that something has happened to us which directed these decisions before we made them. The illusion of freedom in the absolute sense in which it was used is included in this re-discovery. This is not determinism. Existentialism is certainly not determinism. But existentialism and especially psychoanalysis and the whole philosophy of the unconscious have rediscovered the totality of the personality in which not only the conscious elements are decisive.

The fourth point, connected with the previous one, is that moralism can be conquered to a great extent in Christian theology. The call for moralism was one of the great forms of self-estrangement of theology from its whole being. And it is indeed important to know that theology had to learn from the psychoanalytic method the meaning of grace, the meaning of forgiveness as acceptance of those who are unacceptable and not of those who are the good people. On the contrary; the non-good people are those who are accepted, or in religious language forgiven, justified, whatever you wish to call it. The word grace, which had lost any meaning, has gained a new meaning by the way in which the analyst deals with his patient. He accepts him. He does not say, "You are acceptable," but he accepts him. And that is the way in which, according to religious symbolism, God deals with us; and it is the way every minister and every Christian should deal with the other person.

Another direct help given by psychoanalysis not only to religion but to theology, is its help in understanding the history of religion. Let me say here only a few words which are at the same time an acceptance and a criticism of the way in which many psychoanalysts deal with the history of religion. They interpret religion as projection of the father image or of the mother image or of I don't know what. In doing so they show some truth, namely, the truth good old Xenophanes knew before Socrates, namely, that every being chooses the symbols for the divine according to what he himself is. That is true; there is no doubt about that. But the question remains: projection upon what? What is the screen? And there neither Feuerbach nor the analysts of to-day know the answer. The screen is our ultimate concern. Religion is being ultimately concerned.

The symbols are dependent on our special character—in this the analysts are quite right. But there is something that precedes the act of projection, as every technical analogy shows clearly. But the analogy is deeper than technical. It means that if we use the father image in order to symbolise our ultimate concern, then the ultimate concern is not the father image. Rather, the ultimate concern is the screen into which the father image is put. This very simple consideration is usually forgotten in psychoanalytic literature. On the other hand, it shows that we have to be very critical about the symbols of religion. We always have to ask with respect to our practical piety to what extent distorted psychological elements enter into the image of our gods. This holds for every religion, and this must be maintained. So much for the history of religion.

Before the re-discovery of confession and counselling (which were completely lost in Protestantism), everybody was asked to do something, and if he didn't do it he was reproached. And now he can go to somebody, can talk to him, and in talking he can objectify what is in him and get rid of it. If the counsellor or confessor is somebody who knows the human situation, he can be a medium of grace for him who comes to him, a medium for the feeling of overcoming the cleavage between essence and existence.

Finally and lastly, what is the influence of psychoanalysis on systematic theology? Let me say this: The interpretation of man's predicament raises the question that is implied in man's very existence. Systematic theology has to show that the religious symbols are answers to this question. Now, if you understand the relation of theology and depth psychology in this way, you have grasped the fundamental importance, the final and decisive importance, of all this for theology. There is no theistic and non-theistic existentialism or psychoanalysis. They analyse the human situation. Whenever the analysts or the philosophers give an answer, they do it not as existentialists. They do it from other traditions, whether it be Catholic, Protestant, Lutheran, humanist or socialist. Traditions come from everywhere, but they do not come from the *question*. By the way, let me tell you this story. Last fall I had a long talk in London with T. S. Eliot, who is really considered to be an existentialist. We talked about just this problem. I told him, "I believe that you cannot answer the question you develop in your plays and your poems on the basis of your plays and poems, because they only develop the question—they describe human existence. But if there is an answer, it comes from somewhere else." He replied, "That is exactly what I am fighting for all the time. I am, as you know," he told me, "an Episcopalian." And he is really a faithful Episcopalian; he answers as an Episcopalian but not as existentialist. This means that the existentialist raises the question and analyses the human situation to which the theologian can then give the answer, an answer given not from the question but from somewhere else, and not from the human situation itself.



I cannot go very much into the special problems which arise here. I want to show you that I believe that this great movement characterises the 20th century. We are less conscious of this movement than perhaps the next generations will be. One is never conscious completely of what is going on in the time in which one lives. But what I have tried to do this evening has been to make you conscious of the tremendous importance of these movements for the interpretation of our human situation. The existentialist and psychoanalytic movements do this analytically, showing the human predicament in all its implications and distortions.

Theology has received tremendous gifts from these movements, gifts not dreamed of fifty years ago or even thirty years ago. We have these gifts. Existentialists and analysts themselves do not need to know that they have given to theology these great things. But the theologians should know it.

**Paul Johannes Tillich, D.D.**, has been Professor of Philosophy and Theology at Union Theological Seminary (New York) since he migrated from Germany in 1933. He has, this fall, moved to join the newly-constituted faculty of Harvard Divinity School. His published works in English include: *The Religious Situation*, *The Interpretation of History*, *The Protestant Era*, *The Shaking of the Foundations*, *Systematic Theology I*, and *The Courage to Be*: The foregoing paper was delivered as the Wm. Ellery Channing Lecture in Chicago on May 18th, 1954.

## *The Authority of the Church*

W. A. HELLABY

THE authority of our churches—those called Unitarian and Free Christian—is what we are to consider. Before we do this, however, we must answer the question, “What is a Church?”

The church is first and foremost a community: it arises out of man’s fundamental need to live with his fellows. This, of course, is not peculiar to the religious group: all social groups grow out of the same fundamental need.

Generations rise and pass away and the experiences of the ages become embodied in the oral and written history of the ever widening

community. Out of their age-long experiences, the group distils the tried and tested wisdom of the ages. It is through the group and through its gifted members that this wisdom comes and grows. And so it is that traditions of greatness become an inspiration to the group. The courage and wisdom of its great ones become the group's pride in the past and its inspiration for the future. The group is held together by nobler bonds—great memories and visions. The true community is born, or is being born. By "the true community" I mean a community of folk who have learnt or, at least, are learning to live together. The very fact that a group is learning to live together means that within the group there is an urge towards a higher level of behaviour. For example, there have always been communities bound together by nothing more noble than the fear of their enemies: within such communities there have always been men and women who have longed for the community to be bound together in bonds of love: these are men and women who have the vision in their own day and they lay the traditions of future ages. They are the growing points of society and they create the necessary tension within a living society. Without them a community would be incapable of rising to higher levels; a group as a group is incapable of rising to nobler levels of life; it is the noble individuals within the society who challenge it and inspire the many to follow their lead. Jesus is the classic example here: he brought into the world a new faith, a new hope, a new love. Even his own disciples could not understand him. He stood alone. At first the spirit he let loose in the world tended to break up contemporary groups: it could not be contained within Judaism: Roman society feared it. Within a community with so much of fear in it, it created a brilliant medieval civilisation. The spirit of Jesus shattered that civilisation in its turn and gave the wheel of history another turn at the time of the Reformation. It is the individual, then, who is the pioneer of higher insights and behaviour within the group. This fact is at the basis of our particular approach to religion. "The test, the ultimate test, is the solitary man left alone with his own decisions."<sup>1</sup>

This is at the basis of my conception of religion and for that reason must form the foundation of my idea of what a Church is. For the moment, however, I am not especially concerned with a religious community as such. I am thinking about any group of people, large or small, who form a community. I would define a community as a group of people living together with a sense of fellowship or mutual belonging. It is also a group who have a history, and traditions that have grown out of history. Thirdly, a community is made up of people who are learning how to behave towards one another in their life together. And finally, a living community has a vision and a purpose. It is this vision and this purpose which are the sign of the living community. No human group worthy of the name of community is without it. What I am trying to say is this;

<sup>1</sup> E. G. Lee, *The Inquirer*, August 14th, 1954.



that within any human group, just because it is human, there is what we have learned to call the religious spirit. It is a spirit in men who are aware of the mystery of the Spirit of Life and who find themselves nearer to this Spirit when they are striving towards nobler living both in themselves and in society.

In short, it is a case of "Before the Church was, I AM." The religious spirit is latent or active in society at large but, within the Church, the religious spirit becomes the dominant spirit and all life is seen in the light of religion. Here are the marks of the religious group as I see them:—

- (a) An explicit recognition of the source of man's religious awareness.
- (b) A continuous attempt to know more truly this Source—this Great Life of the Universe.
- (c) A sustained effort to gain from this Great Life, spiritual and ethical insight and power.
- (d) An attempt to translate this power into noble lives within a community that is growing.
- (e) The proclamation of a vision that is universal which transcends geographical boundaries, race and class divisions, and which cannot be limited even by Time.

Taken together, these characteristics mark off the religious society from the rest of society; they make it unique. They are the marks of all the higher religions. One may use the traditional phraseology to summarise this religious society. It is potentially *One*; it is potentially *Holy*; it is potentially *Catholic*.

So far, I have drawn a rather abstract, idealistic picture of the religious community or church. The religious spirit, however, has expressed itself in many ways; through the words and lives of particular prophets, within limited areas within the world, through particular churches and denominations. This is because the Infinite Spirit has expressed itself through the lives of finite—imperfect men and women. As I have said, the Church is a group which has a history and traditions that have grown out of that history. Let us think first then of the common ancestry we share with the other churches of Christendom.

(1) During the whole of Christian history the Church's religious life has been nourished by the wisdom of the Bible. The New Testament cannot be wrenched from the Old, and within the pages of the Old Testament there is still a unique treasury of spiritual wisdom. We have inherited this wisdom which teaches us that this world is ruled by a Spirit in whose image we are made. We learn from the Old Testament that God is good and that His goodness is like man's, though it transcends it utterly; we learn that God is Almighty. In short, we inherit through the Old Testament a religious spirit that is theistic and ethical.

In common with other churches within the stream of Christian history we can speak of Jesus Christ as our Founder. Dr. J. Drummond in *Studies in Christian Doctrine* uses these words: "It is therefore correct to speak of Christ as the founder of the Church, although he founded it, not by express command, but by the power of his spirit." Again, Dr. Mellone in his latest book *Leaders of Early Christian Thought* writes: "It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Jesus created a Spirit which he foresaw would create communities irreconcilable with those fostered by 'The Jewish Church'."

The Christian Church, therefore—and I include our Church here—owes its very existence to Christ. We of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches owe our existence to-day to the fact of Christ's life and teaching and to the persisting power of his spirit. Like all other churches in Christendom we can trace our descent from the Apostolic Age; to that age when the Apostles and disciples felt themselves to be "a holy brotherhood in Christ" and went all over the known world to create little Christian communities.

Then came the long development of Christendom. During this development the Church accumulated a rich store of spiritual wisdom; it gained its deep insights; it gave its saints to the world; it made its impress on society. All this is our heritage. It is a very precious heritage and we should respect it and use it. Nevertheless, it was during this period that the Church was corrupted by its own power. The Church lost sight of the principle of individual loyalty and the authority of the individual conscience was almost lost sight of in the vast authoritative hierarchy of the Church. But the Unitarian religion rests on the strength to stand alone with personal decision.

The power of Christ turned the wheel of history again at the time of the Reformation: there was a movement towards decentralisation of authority. At first there was little freedom for, at this time, Michael Servetus was crushed between two powerful dogmatic churches. But the movement towards freedom of thought had begun and it could not be stopped. Out of this movement our Churches were born. At first there was a Biblical Unitarianism typified by Joseph Priestley. Then came Martineau with his great teaching about Revelation, Incarnation and the finality of conscience. And so our churches grew almost naturally into the conception of the central importance of the individual mind and conscience.

All this then is our history: it is the soil in which we have grown. From it we draw life. It includes:—

(1) The Elemental Fact of the movement of God's Spirit upon the spirit of Man.

(2) The wisdom of the Old Testament with its faith that this is God's world.

(3) Christ as spiritual founder and teacher.

(4) The Apostolic wisdom of the New Testament with its interpretations of Christ's Spirit.



(5) The long history of the Church with its accumulated wisdom, its great insights and its examples of sanctity.

(6) The development of freedom as an essential atmosphere within which alone, man can grow.

(7) And finally, the great authority assigned to the Individual. All this is our rich heritage. We cannot cut ourselves off from these, our roots, without perilous consequences.

I underline these traditions just because of our emphasis on individual freedom. Without tradition freedom is in danger. After all, a famous text does say, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." It does not say "Where there is liberty, there is the Spirit of the Lord." At the 23rd Congress of Orientalists at Cambridge, Father W. Scheffer, S.J. reported, from Japan, that no fewer than 120 new religions have been granted official recognition since 1941. Most of these new religions, according to him, have been created around some inspired divine being whose word is taken as absolute law by the faithful. In spite of this there is an amazing amount of liberty. "There is even a weekly magazine *The League of New Religions* which serves the faithful of all of them. Perhaps more alarming is the intention of many of them to start missionary activities in foreign countries in the near future. Imagine a country parson in England faced, for example, with the arrival in his parish of a Japanese zealot of the "P.L. Religion"—the Perfect Liberty Sect—in which "man must practise whatever his first inspiration dictates and so live in perfect liberty." One delegate, with experience of village life, doubted whether this would bring any notable change in his particular community."<sup>2</sup>

The rich heritage we have received from the Apostolic Age onwards is part of the authority of our Church—it is a light which will guide us as we move into the unknown future. This is our background and much of it we share with all other Christian denominations. But unique to us is the atmosphere of absolute freedom within which these traditions may develop. And this brings me to a matter which has puzzled me: in a way it is a divergence but it is important. Let me explain. In discussing religious authority, there is one fact that is of more importance than any history or tradition. It is the elemental fact of the impact of God's Spirit upon the spirit of man. On a large brass plaque inside the tower of my Church there is an inscription which announces that this Church is dedicated to the worship of God: the same point is made in the trust deeds of Flowery Field Church. So far as I know, every church in our movement is dedicated to God's worship. In the constitution of the General Assembly there are included these words: "The objects of the Assembly shall be:—

To promote pure Religion and the worship of God in Spirit and in Truth."

How then does this square with our claim to allow absolute freedom?

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, August 25th, 1954.

Is belief in God the one dogma of our Church? My own answer to the latter question would be that "belief in God" is something much more fundamental than any dogma. I believe it is that attitude of faith in the Eternal Spirit of life, without which a church is impossible. "When everything has been said about life there is still a mystery to be lived with, and the demands of this mystery come nearer to providing human fulfilment than any other experience."<sup>3</sup> These words of E. G. Lee's express my meaning as also do Professor Dorothy Tarrant's in her letter on humanism where she wrote: ". . . the primary purpose of our Churches, as expressed in the typical Trust Deed, ancient or recent, is 'the Worship of God'. Consistently with this function of individual churches, the first stated purpose of our General Assembly is 'to promote pure religion and the Worship of God in Spirit and in Truth'. It is within this purpose that our known freedom is exercised—freedom to find, to worship and to serve God in our own manner."

This journal is called *Faith and Freedom*; that, I believe, is the correct order in the religious life of our churches. Faith is the beginning of the religious life: it is also the beginning of freedom. I have never come across a better expression of the attitude of faith than in the words of an American poet, quoted by Rufus Jones in his book *The World Within* . . .

"A noiseless, patient spider,

I marked, where, on a little promontory, it stood isolated;  
 Marked how, to explore the vacant, vast surrounding,  
 It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself.  
 Ever unreeling them—ever tireless by speeding them,  
 And you, O my soul, where you stand,  
 Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,  
 Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing—seeking the spheres to  
     connect them;  
 Till the bridge you will need, be form'd—till the ductile anchor  
     hold;  
 Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch, somewhere, O my Soul."

I must try now to define the Church we serve:—

- (a) Our Church is a Community of believers in the great Creator Spirit of the Universe.
- (b) It has a history which goes back to Jesus Christ and the Apostles.
- (c) It has, in common with other Churches, a treasury of religious wisdom in the Bible.
- (d) In common with other religious fellowship it follows a wonderful tradition of sanctity.
- (e) Unlike other churches, this community of ours has no credal tests.
- (f) Unlike other churches, our community worships God within an atmosphere of responsible freedom.

<sup>3</sup> *The Inquirer*, August 14th, 1954.

In reality then, the Church is the community of the Friends of God within which these authoritative traditions converge. In other words, the authority of the churches is really made up of a group of converging authorities. The free worshipper must learn the art of appreciating these authorities at their true value and expressing them in his own life. He cannot do this alone—he needs the help of others. This is the function of the Church; it is the point where the multiple authorities of the religious life converge. If what I have said so far is true, these authorities can be divided into three broad types:

I. Those which arise out of the elemental facts of God and man: these are:—

- (a) The individual heart and conscience and mind of man.
- (b) Man's experience of life (practical living).

II. Those which arise out of our long history and traditions:

- (a) The Bible.
- (b) The Saints.
- (c) Jesus Christ.

III. Those which arise out of the Church's corporate life:

- (a) The Church at worship (Prayer).
- (b) The Church at thought (Doctrine).
- (c) The Church at work (Service).

It now remains to discuss the first two groups of authorities as they make their impact on the life of the Church. Behind Christian history and tradition, behind Jesus Christ, behind Judaism, the final decision is made within the soul of the solitary man as he waits humbly on God. Faith in elemental thinking about God is prior to faith in the Bible and its great Revealers. "Christianity," writes Schweitzer, "cannot take the place of thinking but it must be founded on it." It is not the fact that Christ spoke the Sermon on the Mount that makes it true; it is the fact that these immortal insights were born of Christ's converse with God. The same is true of the other prophets. They gained deep insights into the nature of God. They did not perceive Truth with a capital T; they apprehended truths which they clothed in the language and idiom of their day. Through the discipline of thought and worship we may gain the power to appreciate these truths and to reclothe them in our modern idiom: we may gain the power also, to have our own insights. But no man is infallible; in his spiritual adventure he needs his fellows. Absolute power corrupts and so does absolute freedom. It can lead to irresponsibility on the one hand or indifference on the other. The worshipping group is vital and, as a group, provides a centre where insights may be shared, where a man may be encouraged, or dissuaded from eccentricities; where there is mutual joy and fellowship. There is a constant interaction between the individual and the group, and so the group becomes a present living authority for the individual. This authority derives from the principle that "a large body of instructed and thoughtful men is



more likely to be right than the individual." The thoughts, the practical experiences, the insights of the group are brought together and shared, and out of them arise richer insights.

Let us apply this idea to the realm of worship. Our churches are places where a company of the Friends of God meet to seek the Real Presence of God. We who are ministers are brothers in God to our congregations; by our lives, by our prayers, by our services we seek to make God real to ourselves and to our fellows. This is a terrifying responsibility and we cannot do it alone. So it is, that the sense of the Presence of God depends not only on the minister but on every member of the congregation. In our free churches we are on an adventure, discovering God together. Each one among us, can speak a word about the living God. The life of the Church discloses this divine life; in the tender service of baptism; by the bed of the dying; in the ordinary everyday lives of the worshipping group. Again and again one catches glimpses of divine courage and love in the midst of humdrum and very difficult lives. Each member of the worshipping community can be a channel for the grace of God. We must be content to pool our contributions. The sense of group solidarity within the acts of worship, within the discussion group, within the social service group, even within the group at play—the sense of group solidarity and what arises from it—this is a help and a real authority to the individual. It does not lift the ultimate responsibility of course. There must be a real interaction between group and individual and out of this interaction arise all the other authorities of the religious life. The scholar within the group expresses more coherently the thoughts of the group about God and, indeed, lifts their thoughts to higher levels; the saints within the group lift it to higher moral levels and so on. It is the outstanding individual in living communion with the group who becomes its authority. This is true within each individual church and within the denomination at large.

The second group of authorities were, you may remember, those which arise out of our long history and traditions: fundamentally I suppose, these authorities arise out of the interaction between the individual and his group. Very briefly I would like to throw out a few thoughts about the function of the Church in its dealings with these traditional authorities of the Bible, Jesus Christ, the saints of Christendom. The church-at-large exercises her authority here, in the person of her scholars; she delegates to them the task of guiding the church members in their interpretation of the Bible, of Christ's life and teaching. In an article called "A Church Without a Creed" Professor E. A. Sonnenschein has written:—" . . . one condition of progress in the formulation of truth is that the teacher shall be absolutely unfettered by the obligation to maintain any orthodox position . . . there is no finality in the quest for truth. On the other hand, it is open to a Church to protect itself against mere eccentricity of doctrine by providing that the

unfettered teacher shall have earned his right to the 'liberty of prophesying' by first proving to the satisfaction of the Church authority that he has been a humble student of what others have established as truth." In the presentation of ancient authorities we need such wise and humble guidance. This is where our Colleges and our scholars come in. They are produced by the group, are helped by it and in turn help it. Such things are done at the learned level through such works as Dr. Mellone's *Leaders of Early Christian Thought*; on a more popular level through pamphlets issued by our own denominational press. An excellent example of this scholarly presentation of ancient authority is *The Golden Treasury of the Bible*. I believe that more popular histories of our great Unitarian thinkers and saints would contribute to the inspiration and guidance of our people. Such authority as this, arising as it does out of what is true and holy in our past, is not static but a dynamic growing thing. Living scholars and saints take their place beside these of the past; their lives will be enshrined in the traditions of tomorrow. The fruits of this scholarship are transmitted to the smaller groups through books, journals and most important of all through the Church discussion group.

The third group of authorities were those which arise out of the Church's corporate life in Worship, Thought and Work.

*The Worshipping Church.* The central act of worship is prayer: the ground of prayer is faith. As the Church is the centre where the multiple authorities of the religious life converge effectively upon the individual, so it is within the heart of the praying man that these multiple authorities are fused and, from this, new life and new insights emerge. "Where there is no prayer, faith remains a theoretical conviction" wrote our own Commission. I believe that in the heart of the praying man the many authorities I have spoken of become one. Let us therefore consider what seems to happen when we pray, for prayer itself is a great mystery. Prayer is a conscious effort to achieve a sense of God's presence within us and beyond us. It is a lifting up of our moral aspirations, our thoughts, our emotions, our everyday experiences with all their intractableness—it is a conscious lifting up of all these things into the Presence of the Eternal Spirit. In the condition of prayer and meditation there is a vital and dynamic relationship with God. Our reason is clarified in the presence of the Infinite Spirit of Truth; our thoughts and our emotions are cleansed and we see them as they really are in the light of Infinite Goodness: our experiences fall into place and we see them in true proportion. We experience forgiveness and our consciences are lighted up with new moral insights. All the reasoning that has ever exercised our minds, all the emotions of our hearts, all our experiences of life, all our moral decisions, all that we have learnt from the traditions of the past enter into the intense mental and emotional activity of real prayer: under God they become fused into new insights and new power. In short, all the authoritative

guidances we have received within the life of the Church (and without it) merge and become one in the experience of true prayer: it is, in fact, the whole life of a man lifted up into the presence of the Eternal Life of the Universe.

I have deliberately emphasised this aspect just because I believe it is of the most vital importance in our churches: we deeply need to develop this side of our group life. By so doing I believe we create the authority of our Church, within our own group and within society at large. In doing this we shall find firm guidance in living—moral authority and power to follow it.

It is sometimes complained that our Unitarian religion is not redemptive. I don't see why. Prayer is a redeeming power, lifting the individual and the group above low living and past mistakes. Through it God becomes a daily Companion. It is also said that the trouble with the Unitarian religion is that there is no point of rest in it. Now the life of prayer is not free from tension; it is the highest and intensest form of activity of which we are capable. In time of prayer we are assisting the divine process of evolution. Nevertheless, there are rare moments in prayer when we may sense in supreme joy and peace the very Presence of God. It is here in the realm of worship and prayer alone that I see the roots of authority in our Church. I believe that to develop the devotional life would be of special value to our free churches. The rich variety of worship among us is something of which we should be proud; at the same time it is true that we suffer from an excessive individualism. Prayer could be a bond of union within our movement. Other churches have their creeds and rituals; for us, praying groups in all our churches could be links in a powerful chain binding us together. Beyond this, prayer can be (though often it isn't) a point where Unitarian and orthodox meet. And perhaps, even more important from our point of view, the prayer-life can be a bond of union between our movement and other world religions. "Seekers after truth," says Dean Inge, "have never been divided in the chambers where good men and women pray. East and West have both suffered by being separated from each other. . . ." Prayer can be a bond of union amongst us and can thereby give to us the authority which comes from unity.

*The Thinking Church.* In the very nature of the case our Church must be a thinking Church. We have no fixed creeds, yet our people need and expect guidance. For that reason we must always be seeking to express our approach to God, man and society in new ways. The publication of *A Free Religious Faith* was, I think, a splendid venture along these lines. Within a creedless church it is a venture that needs to take place periodically, say every ten years. The authority of our Church both among our own people and within society at large cannot really be sustained without such constant and daring thought. Such group efforts as *A Free Religious Faith* can be a source of real guidance and authority to the individual.



Perhaps, however, we need to popularise such works more thoroughly. This authority, like that of the Church at prayer is one which *we are creating ourselves*.

*Church at Work.* The work of the Church within society flows naturally from its thought and its prayer. Its moral insights compel it to activity within society. And insofar as the Church is able to take part in and inspire social welfare, just so far does its authority become a real thing among the Church members and among society at large. Nevertheless the Church's power to help society is rooted in its own life. Fosdick has written some wise words about this. He writes: "Let no one underestimate (what work for a better social order) is going to cost. At the very least it costs transfigured individual lives and sensitised individual consciences. . . . At the very least it costs superiority of soul that rises high above the world. And what are these things? They are vital, personal religion." And this, as I have tried to show, emerges best within the dedicated group. Again, in this sphere of church life, the authority of the church emerges out of its own activities.

In struggling to work out the operation of authority in our midst, it seemed to me that the metaphor of the wheel was helpful. At the hub of the wheel is the individual whose heart is a place where God may come and dwell. The spokes of this living wheel represent the ways by which God enters into the life of man. Bounding both hub and spokes is the Divine Spirit. The spokes joining God to man are:—

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| (1) Conscience and heart of man | } Elemental facts of God and man.                                  |
| (2) Reason                      |  |
| (3) Experience of life          |  |
| (4) Bible                       |  |
| (5) Saints                      | } Historical and Traditional Authorities.                          |
| (6) Jesus Christ                |  |
| (7) Church at Thought           |  |
| (8) Church at Work              | } Authorities arising out of the present group life of the Church. |
| (9) Church at Prayer            |  |
| (10) Church at Play             |  |

All these ten spokes of authority are needed if the wheel of authority is to be strong. Within the heart of the thinking and praying man these authorities meet and fuse, just as the spokes of the wheel meet in the hub. These authorities meet and are fused within the heart of the individual; they emerge again in new insights and radiate again among the dedicated group.

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# *Human Situations and Religious Experiences*

JOSEPH M. KITTAGAWA, D.B., PH.D.

IT is often said that our religious inquiry begins in our actual human situations. This implies that the answers must also be found in actual human situations. One of the difficult problems is "from what perspective are we to ask questions and find meaning in the nebulous and complex human situations?" Obviously, there are many questions and many answers.

In this paper, an attempt is made not so much to discuss or interpret certain religious concepts, but rather to paint word pictures, depicting scenes from well-known human situations. In these pictures readers will not find minute details such as colours or figures; only a few essential figures will be portrayed—as is done in old Oriental paintings with, for example, a branch of tree, mountain and brook—thus suggesting "perspectives" rather than reproducing actual scenes. The theme of these pictures is the "dark angel."

This title is taken from the scene of Jacob wrestling with an unknown angel all night long (Genesis, Chap. 32). Anyone watching Jacob probably could not have seen the angel, nor could Jacob. But he encountered some power, whose nature he did not know. Hence, Jacob's question: "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name."

In these pictures, then, let us see how different men have encountered the dark angels. Thus, may we find suggestions as to what kinds of questions they asked and what kinds of answers and meanings they found.

The first scene is that of Jacob at the Jabbok. We know that he was the favourite of his aged parents. It was Jacob, and not his elder brother Esau, who received Isaac's paternal blessing. Then Jacob had fled from his father's home, crossing the Jordan into the desert, wandering from place to place, not unlike his grandfather Abraham, who had also wandered in search of "the promised land." Although Jacob prospered, he did not find "the promised land." And, as a last resort he decided to return to his father's land.

But this would involve an encounter with his brother Esau who was angry with him. The Biblical account, in characteristic simplicity, describes the confused mind of Jacob. It says: "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that was with him . . . into two bands. And he said, if Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape" (Genesis 32: 7-8). Indeed, this was good strategy and a practical solution in the circumstances.

But, deep in his heart, Jacob knew it was not the fulfilment of the promise; he knew the sorrow and emptiness of being a

divided person. Thus he prayed: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will do thee good: I am not worthy of the least of all the loving-kindnesses, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two companies. Deliver me, I pray thee from the hand of Esau: for I fear him. . . ." (Genesis 32: 9-11). Jacob knew he was caught between wrath and blessing, death and fulfilment.

That night, Jacob stood at the ford of the Jabbok and wrestled with a dark angel throughout the night. The struggle lasted until the break of the day, when the dark angel asked Jacob to let him go. Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." During the struggle, Jacob must have felt the peculiar combination of danger and blessing in the dark angel. Was he an angel of God, or was he a demonic power, or was he both? Hence the question: "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name?"

The author of Genesis, being an artist, does not give any propositional answer to Jacob's question. We can only infer whatever answer is implied in what follows in the Biblical story. Jacob and his party, not divided, crossed the river. Then he bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother, Esau. "And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (Genesis 33: 4). And the artist says much by adding: "and they wept."

The "promised land" was found, not in a geographical sense, but in the reconciliation of brothers—both repenting and both forgiving.

In our human situations, different men encounter the dark angel at their Jabboks. The dark angel is a threat to final affirmation of the finite in every culture and religion. There are different ways to face the dark angel and different ways to cross the Jabbok.

Let us picture a young man walking aimlessly along a highway. Goethe, the author of *Faust*, is here struggling with his own dark angel. In this picture, Goethe is twenty-four years of age, sensitive to the joy and sorrow of human relations. He felt his own capacity of love, that supreme quality of human nature, more beautiful than anything he had known. And yet, he was quick to recognise in himself the capacity to hate and to be jealous.

He had read much and thought much, but he could not find the meaning of this dual quality of human nature. Bewildered, he had set out on a long journey. And now, after seeking in vain, he was returning home, weary and exhausted. By chance, he came close to Strasbourg, and decided to visit the cathedral there. There something happened to Goethe. He faced the dark angel and crossed his Jabbok.

Goethe admits that, before visiting the cathedral, he had many misgivings about everything "Gothic"—undefined, disordered,



unnatural, a heap of odds and ends, patchwork, overloaded. "I called everything Gothic that did not fit my system," says Goethe, "and so, on my way, I shuddered at what I expected to see, a misformed, curly-bristled monster."<sup>1</sup>

But what did he see? In his own words: "How unexpected was the feeling with which the sight amazed me, when I stood before the building. . . . How freshly it greeted me in the morning brilliance, how gladly I observed the great harmonious masses vitalised in their numberless parts, as in the works of eternal nature, down to the smallest fibre, all of it form, and all bearing upon the whole; how lightly the enormous firm-based building rises into the air: how broken it is, and yet how eternal. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

This is no longer the same Goethe, tormented by the contradiction within himself, struggling with his dark angel, trying to find the character of this mysterious power which drove him in two directions. It is almost as though Goethe looked at himself for the first time—love and hatred, joy and sorrow put together. Here we see a humble mortal prostrate before the gigantic art of nature, lofty and transcending; "how broken it is, and yet how eternal!"

The third picture is that of an Oriental monk in yellow robes. He, like Sakyamuni before him, was disturbed by the facts of life. What is human nature? He was haunted by his dark angel. As a child he was loved by his parents, but early in his life he experienced the sorrow of parting with them. He was destined to marry a fair lady whom his parents had chosen before they left this world. But this girl, so sweet and devoted to him, also was taken away by a fatal sickness. By this time his heart was heavy; he learned that life without love was empty, but what is there in love if the love cannot last?<sup>3</sup>

Then someone told him of Buddha Sakyamuni, the great enlightened, who had learned the meaning of the transitoriness of human life and finally attained *Nirvana*. But what was this Buddhahood Sakyamuni had attained, and where was *Nirvana*? The young seeker wandered endlessly in the mountains, constantly fighting his dark angel.

One day, tired, exhausted and bewildered, he sat under a tree. He had almost decided he was looking for something which did not exist. Then, suddenly a thunderstorm came. At that moment something happened to him. Thus he wrote:

A sudden clash of thunder  
The Mind-doors burst open,  
And lo, there sitteth the old man<sup>4</sup>  
in all his homeliness.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by B. Bosanquet, *A History of Aesthetic* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1904), pp. 306-308.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> This account does not refer to any historical Buddhist.

<sup>4</sup> "The old man" means the Buddhahood.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Alan W. Watts, *The Spirit of Zen* (London: J. Murray, 1935).

What, then, was the character of his dark angel? This, the Buddhist does not explain. Later, however, when someone asked him what to do when one is haunted by such torment, he said: "Let go—submit everything you have, your power, your energy, even your will to fight, then, you will find in your dark angel the real nature of yourself."

And where was Nirvana? To this question, the Buddhist would say:

From the beginning  
That which I sought  
Lay in my hand.

How stupid I was  
To have thought it an echo  
Floating to me  
From beyond.<sup>6</sup>

The fourth scene is taken from the Biblical story of the Prodigal Son. In one sense, this story is Jesus' own dialogue about himself. The young man gathered all he had and journeyed into a far country. And when he had spent everything, a great famine arose in that country. The picture of this young man is not complete without presupposing a dark angel. The mental agony of the Prodigal Son is well expressed in a simple sentence: "But when he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15: 17).

But how dared he return home? Wasn't it better for him to remain, even though it meant eating the pods the swine ate? But his struggle was not solely against hunger. He felt in his dark angel the image of his own father, judging and yet loving. It was this peculiar character of fatherhood from which he alienated himself. "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son. . . ." (Luke 15: 18-19). And he rose and went to his father—he dared to cross his Jabbok.

But while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him, saying "this my son was dead, and is alive again." (Luke 15: 24).

In a real sense, it was "death" which enabled the Prodigal Son to be "resurrected" as the Son of God. Jacob beyond the Jabbok was dead, but crossing the river, "Israel"—the new and resurrected Son—found the fulfilment of life.

It is this picture of Jesus, as the new Israel, which is portrayed in Mark's Gospel. Jesus in this picture is not a triumphant king as in the Fourth Gospel; he is haunted by his own dark angel throughout his ministry.

<sup>6</sup> Translated by Beatrice Lane Suzuki, "Poems of Kobo-daishi." *The Eastern Buddhist* (Kyoto, 1931), V, 313.

As the time of his death approached, Jesus was tormented; "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death." (Mark 14:34). He prayed, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father . . . remove this cup from me." But then, he dared to cross his Jabbok. "The hour is come. . . . Arise, let us be going; behold, he that betrayeth me is at hand." (Mark 14: 41:42). On the cross, however, Jesus cries: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

But this is not the whole picture. The author of Mark's Gospel weaves in another theme; this same Jesus is also portrayed as an unknown angel to the people around him. Jesus is a threat, and the people struggle with this dark angel. He was an unknown quantity even to John the Baptist. He was a constant bafflement to the Pharisees and the Scribes. The account of Peter's confession and the transfiguration haunted the disciples. Who is this man?

And those two themes—the man Jesus haunted by his own dark angel, and Jesus the dark angel, a threat to the people around him—find harmony at the Cross in the words of the centurion: "Truly this man was the Son of God." (Mark 15: 39). From this perspective, these two portrayals of Jesus are inseparably interwoven—a sort of double exposure.

It was this perspective Apostle Paul found on the road to Damascus. He recognised, in the unknown power of Jesus, a real threat to his own mental security. He did not forget Jesus, nor did he run away from this image. He fought against this dark angel; he actively persecuted him. But the more he tried, the more this image came back, like a bad dream.

In the meantime, Paul came to recognise in the image he was persecuting the meaning of human situation—the struggle between meaning and meaninglessness, between the wholeness and brokenness of life. Paul saw clearly that it was he who was the Prodigal Son, struggling with the dark angel; he saw in Jesus the image of the Father, healing and transforming, judging and forgiving.

Faced with this double-exposure of his dark angel, Paul asked, much as Jacob had asked in ancient times: "Who art thou, Lord?" And the answer came to him, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest."

Paul struggled with his dark angel until the break of day, and in the midst of the struggle, in the midst of the brokenness of human life, he found meaning, courage, strength and ground for hope. He crossed his Jabbok and found the fulfilment of life—"the promised land."

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# *The Other Road in Medicine and Religion*

SIDNEY S. ROBINS

IN reviewing a book of Julian Huxley's not long ago, Joseph Wood Krutch had this to say:

"Physicists are now confessing in connection with their problems that the very adjectives 'mechanistic' and 'deterministic' become meaningless when used to describe certain processes so complicated and so subtle as to lie now, if not forever, beyond the human mind's power of analysis."

Well, many of us always felt in danger of getting our feet off the ground when we argued about "free-will" and "determinism," and it feels good to have this indirect support. (We may add that the reference to Mr. Krutch is meant to be a sop to Cerberus, as we set out to take a thumb-nail sketch from the larger topography of the history of philosophy.)

In our Western tradition, which began with the Greeks, there have been two great and practically consequential systems of metaphysics, the one emphasising "efficient" causation, and the other "final" causation—which means objectives and ends. The first school stems from Democritus, and is known sometimes as Empiricist, more often as the Materialist, occasionally as the Mechanistic School. The other comes from Plato and Aristotle, and is known as the Idealist School. The first mentioned has very largely held the field in science. The other, partly by reason of fusion with Christianity, has been at the centre in ethical and religious philosophy.

It is certainly easier for anybody to suppose he understands the Materialist school than the other. We are talking about understanding, not faith or anything else. One is reminded of Hegel's remark that the understanding has no religion. It is so easy to think in terms of simple cause and effect, and to say: "Everything must have a cause." And from that, progress is easy to acceptance of general causal laws not only as valid but as controlling, and to a totally mechanistic picture of nature and life. The whole scientific structure rests on this scaffolding, the wondrous contributions of science follow from it, and on it the realistic business of everyday life largely hangs. It is easy to grasp.

The other and rival outlook is less simple and easy. It says, not that mechanism is a false philosophy but that it is a useful view within very wide limits, rather than definitive; and that there is inner purpose and striving at the bottom of it. Aristotle said quite roundly that all causation goes back to "final" causes, which is to say, to end-objectives.

What his line of descent says to-day is something like this—and at least it carries the war into the enemy's country, where we shall leave it—that the laws of cause and effect apply wherever you are dealing with large and mixed masses of things, such as a sand-pile, or a boulder made up of trillions of molecules of this and that mineral, or a forest of trees, or a pond full of water, or a body of cells (taken as a collection), or a society of animals or men. The larger the number of units in the mass, or body, or society, the better for deriving "laws of nature." But on the other hand, every original unit in nature, of any kind, is an incarnate purpose.

A single tree is an organised purpose with a programme of growth contained within it, as you can see. To go back to the fundamental elements of our world: every atom is a self-maintaining pattern; take away from it one electron, and it will spend all time if necessary, trying to get that one electron back. A molecule or a cell is a considerably more complicated *pattern*, or organisation, or organism. It probably does not matter much which name we use or just where the principle of growth or of life is supposed to enter. The essential point is that these basic units operate from within, so far as the neighbours will permit or allow them room. In fact, even in neighbourly relationships, while influenced, they are not altogether pushed around by external forces. Action is communal. Every original unit is in the first place a built-in purpose, a self-determiner.

And what we call the law of cause and effect is simply a lot of purposes, or ends, which happen to coincide, or concur. Atoms in the mass follow certain laws because they occur in terrific numbers, and the heavily weighted majority of them all want the same thing, or have a common bent. Nearly all men are out for security, so that you can gamble on it; everybody hates taxes; nobody shoots Santa Claus; all boys are out for a good time; all girls want to look nice. It is somewhat the same in nature, only far more conclusively. By weight of vast numbers, by overwhelming mass-effect, we get what are called laws of nature. It is comprehensive and final in a way; but it may be only a landslide of votes.

A. N. Whitehead is enough of an Aristotelian to be quoted on this side. In *Modes of Thought* he says: "The laws of nature are large average effects which reign impersonally."<sup>1</sup> And again: "It is by reason of average expression and average reception that the average activities of merely material bodies are restrained into conformity with the reigning laws of nature."<sup>2</sup>

Natural laws shade off into statistics, especially where you are dealing with highly complicated organisms. A society of men is subject to Gallup polls and the like, even though the individual man may be an inquisitive question-mark—as Aristotle suggested in his *Ethics*, seeking his own pleasure, or happiness, or the Good, and doing it either wisely or foolishly.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 29.      <sup>2</sup> Op. cit. p. 39.

The acid test of the whole matter, according to this point of view, is that you can imagine a world made up of purposive units of all sorts of levels—atom, molecule, cell, animal, man—and interpret all the mechanical laws you find from that starting-point; whereas you cannot possibly start with rigid general laws and get the first spark of freedom, initiative, or responsibility. Neither Marx, Hitler, nor Stalin could begin with the state as the political unit and find any respectable place for the citizens. They are all slaves or ciphers. It is the same in nature. You cannot start from general laws or mass-principles and have any room left for freedom or individuality anywhere. But you can get all the generality you need by starting from the other, individual end.

Such is the anti-mechanist philosophy of things. No doubt the question, like any other philosophical question, can be further debated or refined upon from either side. But here ends our thumbnail sketch. As we said, religious faith has from of old been allied with the school of purpose over against that of mechanism. And this school has also played a non-negligible part in some of the sciences.

We go on to speak of medicine and to quote an eminent German-born scholar, now teaching at Harvard—Mr. Werner Jaeger—on the subject of medical history. Mr. Jaeger has written about the most complete treatise there is on Greek education—*Paideia*. Some years ago at a meeting of the American Philosophical Association, he reviewed some fragments of late Greek writers in the field of medicine. He said that in the first centuries after Aristotle, medical leadership shuttlecocked between the Idealist school and that of Democritus. And he speculated about what would have been the outcome if the science, or art, of medicine had developed for the long pull in the former direction instead of in the latter.

Democritean medicine is a glorious example of the great line of scientific tradition. It has emphasised cause and effect. It has classified diseases, described the typical progress of many of them, developed general remedies and anti-toxins, and catalogued *materia medica*. It treats the individual as a case of something that is world-wide. Perhaps we can say that it has concentrated on discovering and taking care of our common diseases and plagues and ailments. And its glory is a big part indeed of all the glory of science. It could by no means at all have been spared.

The Aristotelians, on the other hand, whenever they were developing the science or art (it becomes a bit of an art in their hands) of medicine, operated from the standpoint of goals, and the overall goal of health. Their emphasis was on physical well-being; and their question was not so much how to cure entrenched maladies as how to help people to be healthy—perhaps even more healthy than they were in the first place. Their mode of attack naturally led them to pay more attention to the individual and to his whole environment.

As one recalls Mr. Jaeger, he said that early Aristotelian medicine emphasised getting the right amount of sleep, right kinds



and amounts of bodily exercise, good bodily habits, right kinds and amount of food and drink, and so on. Of course it developed its quota of cranks; people who thought health was all a matter of diet, or exercise, or some one factor.

Something of this approach was so obvious that it has necessarily been picked up in the more recent history of medicine, in what we call preventive medicine. But one can see that if this school had continued in the lead, or had even had a few more good turns at the helm, we should have seen a good deal more of certain tendencies which have seeped in through the cracks. We are thinking of such things as athletics for all the people; recesses and exercises for those who bend over desks all day; more walking and less automobiling; more study of diet even than now; more inspection of individuals before they get sick; balanced programmes of activities to fit individual cases and temperaments. We can see that all along the line there would have been more emphasis upon the individual (that is where medicine becomes an art), for one reason because health would be an all-time business and study for everybody. But the self-consciousness thus engendered might not be as unhealthy as is now often the case.

With this kind of medicine went a faith in the possibility of warding off diseases by keeping the body in tune, and bodily health up to a high pitch.

A good physician and ex-Harvard-Medical-School teacher who, besides being a bit of a heretic in medicine, believes in universal military training, once put the argument for that upon the simple ground that our youth sadly need to be taught to carry their bodies straight. Some might think that we ought to consider that question first from the religious or political angle. But he is an Aristotelian in medicine, believing that correct posture, developed early enough, would take care of many of the bodily ills that are bearing down on us, especially heart disease. He should need no defence. I quote him in the first place to underscore an idea to which many of us have been coming on our own: that we ought to spend more time taking care of our health while we still have it, of course with the aid of the physicians. Beyond that, the argument that posture means a lot for the heart sounds reasonable enough to the common man. And even the ancient speculation or faith that a fore-armed body can ward off some of these infections and plagues will hurt nobody, and looks inviting.

We may possibly recall that when Napoleon was marching and carrying on with an army infected by bubonic plague, and failed to catch it, he believed that his destiny kept him well. We have all heard of people who just had to keep up until they had finished a task, and then caught a germ or just buckled up completely. We have heard too of people who simply could not die, refused to consider it, until they had seen some goal achieved. The doctors do not claim to know just what part the will of the patient plays

in the hospital, but they recognise it as important. It looks as if work, active exercise, hope, duty, all these urgencies of purpose and life, contribute in unknown ways and degrees to bodily vitality.

There seems to be an important analogy between medicine and religion, in dealing with both disease and health.

Until very recently at least, there was a very common criticism made of the Christian Church, namely, that it had concentrated too much on taking care of our sins and saving our sick souls, and had been too little interested in social problems and active virtues. But if there is any analogy with medicine, that criticism may have gone a little too far. There may be as grand and massive a service-in-aid to sick spirits as there is in aid to sick bodies. The widest and most popular religious service might very well come through those teachers and preachers who reduce human life to some deep common denominator, some general disease or epidemic like Sin, or failure, or fear, or even ignorance (there is a specific offered for that), and who proceed to develop and apply some grand common remedy.

If spiritual sickness were not as common as the common cold, there probably would be no great historical mass-religions based upon it. Moreover most, if not all, of us, are spiritually ill at times during the process of growing up, and probably most of us are subject to occasional dark contagions as long as we live. These ills seem to have a common character, based upon contradictory elements within human nature. Teachers of spiritually sick people, and of all of us, at times, should probably be allowed just as much room as they need for emphasising human helplessness or illness, and likewise for preaching salvation—provided they keep in mind that they are talking of experience and do not try to make us all express it in their language. We need to be born again. We die to live. We die to self and arise into broader interests—which nevertheless may be a part of our purposive or “final” nature. It is depth of feeling expressing itself in all these old sayings. And here we have a mass-principle of religion, even while human beings differ from one another enormously in many ways, far more than do atoms or cells.

Religion, adapted to mass-psychology, can be very cheap sometimes. Nevertheless, religion so adapted is, on the medical analogy as well as by common witness, a real need. In fact our present purpose is simply to bring into the same ready recognition another way in which men are religious.

This other way of religion is based upon moral and spiritual health, and aims to stimulate and increase it. Jesus seems to have been appealing to moral health when he invited common men by the wayside to “come and see.” Of course he thought some ground was stonier or harder than other, but he believed in broadcasting the word. Obviously we are thinking of religion as teaching hopefulness about humanity when we trace our democracy back to the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus. Democracy does not go

at all with the doctrine of total depravity. In fact, you cannot have faith in democracy without assuming more good than evil in ordinary human nature. Such faith is plainly suggested in the beginning of the Old Testament, where we read of man's being created in the image of God! Nothing pessimistic there! We find the same faith recorded of St. Paul, where he makes his diplomatic approach to the men of Athens, quoting their own poets as teaching that men are God's offspring, and declaring that "in Him we live and move and have our being."

The history of medicine suggests that there ought to be a branch of religion also, based upon the individual as a going concern and upon promoting his health. This would fit in with that broad basis for ethics which Christianity took from the Idealist school, and which has been the main alternative to Hedonism, Utilitarianism, and "Darwinism"—all of which have some historic connection with the other ancient school. That principle is most commonly rendered "self-realisation." Not self-assertion, or self-expression! Those notions assume that the individual is already made and does not have to grow in order to be of any significance to himself or anybody else. Self-realisation, self-fulfilment!

For one, St. Thomas accepted self-realisation as the principle of the good life in so far as it can be discovered and achieved by natural means, and as valid up to the point where special revelation and the saints give us the further-going ideal of Blessedness at which to aim.

Ambition to create and divine inspiration are of course always in danger of getting confused with personal inflation, temporary enthusiasm, immature sense of destiny. But probably there is no recipe, no general rule, which will protect us from these, any more than from other dangers attendant upon an active life. We seek not to allay all fears or void all dangers. Whoever succeeded in that?

Taking them by and large, the more creative portion of the race is somewhat less easy for the church or anybody else to organise and control. As they all have some originality, many of them may be really individualists. A few of them may not recognise any religious fellowship beyond that with their own colleagues and fellow-craftsmen. Their one little craft may be everything to them. They may lack wide human outlook—although the greatest artists never do. They may enjoy being set apart, and even dress for it. They may sit in the seat of the scornful. But it does not appear likely that Mr. T. S. Eliot can succeed in recalling to any form of the mass-religion all the other poets, the "artists" of all kinds, the people whose religion lies in the first place in their work. Their cry is: "O Lord, the work of our hands, establish Thou *that* upon us."

On the road of this personal religion, the hopes of world peace, centring in God, centre in the inspiration of love or good-will. And so they naturally express themselves in feeding the hungry and encouraging home rule.



There is a highest stretch of this road where men are nobly stimulated by great examples. The attractive force works at its highest level of effectiveness through instances of devotion to truth in times of repression or intimidation. It works through present instances of vicarious sacrifice as well as historic ones—with one great historic instance exceeding all others in whatever degree one may feel. St. Francis, Mr. Gandhi, and some others, besides whatever local mass-appeal they exerted, and apart from the question of whether they knew anything about organisation or founded any institutions, are and remain centres of personal inspiration and discipleship. But it takes a stout man to achieve that standing. And we seem to need a continuous crop of new revealers, even if they are only new unveilers of an old revelation. A thought which must frequently humble the ordinary teacher of religion is that the power of the Word will always lie in the life behind it, in the energetic ambition that is full of love to man. That is why so many preachers are always holding the fort and waiting for "one who is to come."

We have traced an analogy between metaphysics, medicine, and religion. We began with the two great historic schools, of mechanism on the one hand and inner purpose on the other. The one characteristically views human nature with an eye backward towards the roots and the earthy; the other looks forward towards blossom and fruit. In medicine there are at present two complementary approaches to the health question, although not equally used. One of them develops mass-methods for controlling our ills; the other makes a study of the individual and tries to increase his health and vitality. In religion we have in some measure the same two trends, one based upon sin and soul-sickness; the other based upon the good, sound, or promising, shoots within human nature. The second, while rather under-developed up to this time and sometimes viewed as tainted with secularism, seems to be the personal approach of many of the very greatest religious leaders. These have given a lot of their time to the education of just a few disciples. They have not appeared as experts in organisation or in mass-religion methods. With them, the movement exists largely for the individuals in it; just as, in our Western theory of things, the state exists for the citizens. In their eyes, even the grand ecumenical appeal that we shall all pull together for some distant goal or Kingdom of God seems to be subordinate to the aim of producing significant individuals, one at a time.

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# *MRA: Help or Hindrance in our World?*

ROBERT S. PLATT, PH.D.

**M**ORAL Re-Armament is an ideological movement of our day to which many people look with hope. It has arisen in England and America among people of intelligence and social standing, including prominent leaders in public life. It has spread vigorously on the European continent and in the Orient, where people of all classes have listened gladly to its message.

What is the basis of MRA's success? What are the elements of its strength and of its weakness, if any? What are its consequences?

The primary appeal of MRA is to individual people among their families and friends. Redemption of the world begins at home, not with vague plans of world order and unknown masses far away. For me as an individual, the first step is to admit the need for change in my own life, to acknowledge my faults, and to apologise without reservation to those against whom I have harboured hatred or done wrong. This is followed by a sense of release, opening the way to a new life. Here are precepts familiar in Christianity: individual conversion, repentance, and forgiveness. The new life of MRA calls for acceptance of absolute moral standards—honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love—and of the guidance of God in all decisions. This implies faith in a good God and in the potential goodness of life. It is accompanied by absolute and uncritical acceptance of the good cause represented by MRA.

Christians generally can subscribe to these ideas, and so can members of other world religions: Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, and Hindus. To disagree with terminology or with particular items of belief might be called quibbling. For example, some Christians, willing to accept the principles of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love, may be unwilling to call them "The Four Absolutes." Life is to be understood in relative, not absolute, terms. Human relations of absolute honesty, no thought withheld, would be hard to develop constructively. Absolute purity seems to some to preclude thoughts of marriage. Absolute unselfishness seems to call for the extinction of myself and my life. Love particularly is relative, if it is to mean more than an indiscriminating detached feeling toward everyone and no one.

Some Christians believing in God's guidance may be unwilling to specify the attributes of God in the terms required by MRA: that God has a detailed plan for me and for everyone else, and that He will guide me unfailingly in making every decision properly to fulfil my part in the plan; that success will attend me as long as

I follow God's guidance in my life, and that ultimate success is in store for the human race in accordance with God's plan for the world brotherhood of man.

Some Christians believe in a less deterministic future, in free will not merely to choose between right decisions in a predetermined plan and wrong decisions against the plan, but to make new and creative decisions in a complex pattern of life, participating in God's creativity through his grace, accepting responsibility and continuing to grow in spirit through failure as well as success in the affairs of this life, believing that ultimate success lies beyond our ken and not necessarily in progress to perfection of the human race in this world.

Whatever may be our differences in such matters of belief, it may be thought that these are unimportant, that general agreement on a large high-minded programme is sufficient, that we can forget our doubts about absolutes and attributes of God to join hands with wholehearted zeal in this good cause for a new world of people changed in heart. We need to join hands in a great cause as never before. We are confronted across the Iron Curtain by another world-programme hostile to us and to our way of life. A merely negative attitude on our part in opposition to Communism is not enough. We need a programme no less dynamic to which we will devote our lives, and we would like to have an ideology to which we can subscribe with wholehearted enthusiasm. Does MRA provide the cause, the ideology, and the programme for our devotion?

Before dropping our differences and joining MRA, the question of consequences needs to be considered. Does MRA provide sure guidance for a solution of our problems—the guidance of God—or at least the best guidance available in the affairs of our time, personal and world-wide? As usual, experience in the past and present is our best clue to the future.

An example of MRA in action is provided by the current presentation of a new operetta, "The Vanishing Island," written and produced to carry the message of MRA, and now on a world tour, to Asian countries outside the Iron Curtain. The performance is well staged and well directed, by no means an amateur effort. Leading parts are taken by professional actors and singers, and the whole cast is imbued with MRA enthusiasm. The style is that of Gilbert and Sullivan.

The first act depicts the people and government leaders of an island called I-love-me, a stereotype of a nation completely sunk in weakness, selfishness, and foolishness, drawn from the cinema, the newspapers, and other sources of popular opinion about England and America—the people frivolous, the leaders futile and ridiculous, without redeeming features or good impulses (except for a king tired of his obsolete throne, who withdraws from responsibility).

The second act depicts a country called We-hate-you, obviously Russia, a stereotype less intimate and scornful: young people neatly



dressed, serious, united, and their dictator serious and determined, suppressing impulses toward human feeling in the interest of the cause. The emissaries from I-love-me appear and by contrast look even more ridiculous than in their homeland.

The third act, back in I-love-me, comes quickly to a conclusion. The rich and selfish people of the island reject the demand of We-hate-you to share their wealth. In consequence, cursed by the dictator of We-hate-you, the island begins to sink into the sea. The islanders are helpless to resist, but their ex-king has already realised their foolishness and calls on them to change. The people are still discouraged and their leaders as futile and ridiculous in appearance as ever. But suddenly, in well chosen words, they announce their change of heart. They apologise for their previous meanness and profess their friendship for We-hate-you. The curse is lifted. The dictator, hearing kind words and seeing friendly faces, softens in his hatred, trusts their sincerity, and accepts their friendship.

In simple outline, the play is a direct exposition of certain tenets of MRA. Beyond this, it carries other implications more complex and not necessarily consistent. Presumably audiences will react differently. An MRA audience is likely to be pleased by the clear presentation of their belief. An intelligent British or American audience is likely to be amused by the clearer caricature of their weaknesses and foibles, but sceptical about the sudden changes in the last act: the change of I-love-me to altruism and of We-hate-you to friendship. An audience in Japan or India is likely to approve the picture of England and America as confirming their impression of decadence, to accept with satisfaction the picture of Russia as firm, dedicated to a great cause, and sincerely ready to be friendly and trustful, and thus to justify a policy of unarmed neutrality and simple confidence in both sides of the cold war, but particularly in Communism.

This last reaction has direct political implications apparently at cross purposes with British and American foreign policy in Asia. Such an effect does not seem to be the real intention of MRA in presenting the play to audiences in Japan, Formosa, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Pakistan, Iran and Iraq. In fact, this outcome seems to be at cross purposes with the announced objective of MRA to overcome and not to aid Communism.

Analysis indicates that the play itself is not strictly in harmony with some tenets of MRA. For example, MRA begins with an appeal to individual people for change in their personal lives, but apart from individual change in the ex-king the play depicts a sudden and inexplicable change in a mass of people. Moreover the change in the crowd on the stage is generalised to represent changes in the whole nation which, by definition in the play, has been thoroughly rotten. Likewise the Communist dictator in his sudden change is clearly representative and carries the full authority of his nation.

Not only the suggestion of mass change but also the emphasis

on nationalism seems out of keeping with MRA, which has advocated respect for individual people in every nation irrespective of race or nationality—not indiscriminate denunciation of the people of one nationality as compared with those of another and not endorsement of the fallacy prevalent in Asia that British people are all alike, and Americans just as bad.

The problem of pointing out these undesirable features to MRA people and persuading them to make changes seems simple but is in fact difficult. At the outset, humility is characteristic of MRA, together with apology for past wrongs. But this is followed by confidence in the validity of God's guidance, placing any major project of the group practically beyond the reach of criticism. Even apology tends to become a ceremonial act of group repentance for general or national wrongs done before.

Reasonable persuasion in details is not an easy accompaniment of absolute devotion to a universal cause. The ideology of MRA deals only with individual change directed toward world change. Between these two extremes of the individual and the world, MRA is not concerned with intermediate types of organisation or social structure to help attain the final end. Existing forms of economic and political order are overlooked in aiming at a new world of people changed in heart. The ideas and devices of democracy no less than those of dictatorship and totalitarianism are held in relatively low esteem. Democratic interests might be inadvertently injured on one occasion and aided on another.

"The Vanishing Island" presented in Asia seems to portend unintentional injury to democracy. Other MRA plays have seemed distinctly helpful in domestic affairs and without major political implications. Historically there is nothing new about such random relationships: absolute drives toward universal ends have had accidental effects in particular local affairs, sometimes opposite effects from those desired by the participants.

Shall we join MRA? Presumably, we who see the complexities of life unemotionally, with its mixture of good and evil, and all the intermediate shades between black and white, will refuse to join the MRA. We are willing to discriminate and to struggle with each problem as it arises and are free to do so, although at the same time believing in God and seeking his help. Surely it would only be if we were not free to choose daily among relative values, but were free to make only one absolute final choice between Moral Re-Armament and Communism, that we should then choose MRA and hope for continuing guidance.

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## EDITOR'S ADDENDUM ON MRA

The following passages are quoted from *The Psychology of Social Movements*, by Hadley Cantril, pages 144-168. Frank Buchman was the founder of MRA and presently leads the group, which was formerly known as "The Oxford Group."

"Since the duty of carrying out God's plan rests solely with the individual it is therefore particularly essential that the group contain as many key people as possible. Buchman believes the church has horribly neglected what he calls the 'up-and-outers'—the wealthy people who represent the vested interests . . . Buchman himself carries the doctrine to its logical conclusion when he states:

'I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a front line of defence against the anti-Christ of Communism. Think what it would mean to the world if Hitler surrendered to the control of God. Or Mussolini. Or any dictator. Through such a man God could control a nation overnight and solve every last, bewildering problem. The world needs the dictatorship of the spirit of God. They (social problems) could be solved within a God-controlled democracy, or perhaps I should say theocracy, and they could be solved through a God-controlled fascist dictatorship.' (*New York World Telegram*, Aug. 26, 1936)."

Cantril concludes:

"Buchmanism has gathered momentum, therefore, essentially because it shows certain bewildered people a way to interpret their personal problems and the larger social problems of their world without endangering their status. It provides a psychological mechanism whereby they can escape the responsibility of dealing directly with conditions which they realise are not right and just. It attracts to itself people who want to improve these conditions without injuring their own positions and who want to avoid any alignment with existing institutions or ideologies which assume that individual problems cannot be solved without collective action. Its lack of any well-formulated programme makes it highly opportunistic; its resignation to 'God's' plan forces it to abandon reason as an instrument to be used in the solution of all problems; its individualism and refusal to consider the social context that gives rise to social problems makes it inevitably anti-democratic."



# “A Vast Uneasiness”<sup>1</sup>

ABOUT PAUL AND PAULINE CHRISTIANITY

JOHN WM. RATTRAY

*‘Listen to this’ shouted Monkey, ‘after all the trouble we had getting here . . . after your specially ordering that we were to be given the scriptures, Ananda and Kasyapa . . . gave us blank pages to take away! What is the good of that to us?’. Said the Buddha smiling, ‘You need not shout. . . .’ It is such blank scrolls that are the true scriptures but I see that the people of China are too foolish and ignorant to believe this, so there is nothing for it but to give them scrolls with writing on them.’<sup>2</sup>*

THE decline in the status and influence of the Churches is now palpable. There must be an explanation. Orthodoxy deplores in the People an alleged carelessness and unbelief, and looks outside its own walls for the reason. But “unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build,” and this is most valid as to foundations. The present essay is concerned with one, Paul, whom the Churches have delighted to honour to the superlative degree of Sainthood. To his interpretation of the Master’s Teaching the said Churches have given the provocative title of “Pauline Christianity” and Paul has been exalted to a place only just below that of the Master himself. Within the Churches the realisation of dwindling interest and influence, where there should be increase, has evoked a degree of concerned activity, but none of it has revealed any awareness of the possibility that it could be due to their own tenaciously held, yet ill-founded tenets. They insist on dogmatic teaching in the name of “Jesus Christ our Lord” that lacks support in anything uttered or exemplified in what we learn of Jesus in the gospels. They have mischievously and disloyally grafted on the teaching of Saul of Tarsus who neither met, nor knew, the Master. If this evokes demur, there remains to be explained the widely accepted identification of Christian orthodoxy with “Pauline Christianity,” a designation which is extrinsic, mischievous, misguiding, lacking in sense of loyalty, and renders its inventors and successive acceptors liable to reproach for a “darkening of counsel by words without justification.” It may indeed be suggested that the phrase does not survive tests as to coherence and reverence. For how may Christians lawfully and loyally “Paulinise” the life, conduct, and utterances of the Master, all of which comprised his

<sup>1</sup> The title chosen from the life of Nicolas Herman of Loraine: published in Edinburgh in 1727.

<sup>2</sup> Aldous Huxley, quoting Wu Ch’eng-en: *The Perennial Philosophy*. Chatto & Windus: 1946.

teaching? In as far as these have been the subject of attempted graftings, tendentious interpretations, presumptive assumptions and in any way tampered with, they are not the gospel of Jesus Christ and we are not enriched. Paul, by his proclivity for self-expression got his ideas on record sooner than the first Apostles.

It is submitted that no system exists pertaining to religion and morals that may loyally and honourably be described as Pauline *Christianity*. That it ever came into existence, may be accounted for by a stir of conscience—a recognition that while Paul's propaganda said very many things *about* what he had picked up as to the Master's teaching, it really must be qualified, if only in ecclesiastic self-protection.

Before dealing with the problems created by Paul, let attention be given to the important consideration, that the Master did not found any Church. The text and authority is in *Matthew* alone. It has only to be read by minds cleared of emotional bias, for it to become clearly evident that it could not project a material structure or great organisation. There is play on the Greek word for "Peter," but the "Rock" was assuredly not any man nor material. Take the trouble to read again in context and you will see—as did the late Rev. J. Todd Ferrier—that what is referred to was the apprehension by Peter of the true design and hope of the Master—that which "flesh and blood" had not revealed.

"The term 'Peter' had a deep spiritual significance. It denoted a quality of soul; a power of spiritual perception, the bed-rock upon which alone, great and true spiritual experience can be built up. It was the rock upon which alone, the Church of the Living God was to be built, a foundation so sure and firm that the powers of evil would not be able to prevail against it. . . . It referred to the *spiritual understanding*."<sup>1</sup>

The late Dr. E. W. Barnes wrote in a manner impressive by its matter-of-fact quality: "Though Jesus did not found any church"; and, as to the 'Rock' passage, "It is one of those in Matthew which comes from neither Mark nor 'Q'"; and adds, "like most of such . . . it is probably of no historical value."<sup>2</sup>

Brother Mandus, a modern disciple, without purse nor script says: "The real Church, of course, is not built of stone, but of Spirit. Our eternal Sanctuary is forever in Christ within our own souls."<sup>3</sup>

In spite of the Churches' preference for Paul over Peter, James, and John, there is ample evidence that Peter, whom the Master entrusted with the establishing of the true Church of the Spirit, did not neglect his commission. In *Acts*, chapters 2, 4 and 5, is reported

<sup>1</sup> *The Master*: Lund, Humphries, for The Order of the Cross. 1925.

<sup>2</sup> This is admitted here to illustrate how Doctors of Divinity and Theology can differ as to the basic. It does not affect the point at issue. See *The Rise of Christianity*: Longmans, 1947. If Barnes is right, not only did the Master not found any Church: he never said anything that could even be misconstrued!

<sup>3</sup> "The Crusader," October, 1953.

3000 souls *added*: 5000 “despite much hostility”; and “multitudes of men and women” because of the “signs and wonders.” And let it be noted that Paul had not been heard of then! It is actually contended by quite sincere students that these are mere figures of speech, and that but for Paul, Christianity might never have been heard of. The reply to that is, first: that as a crisp marginal note in the A. V. would have redeemed the rhetoric from all taint of falsity, why was so simple a device not used?; and second: that to make such claims for Paul is not only mere debating, but is by implication to cast doubt on the transcendent vitality of the teaching of the Master—and that is intolerable. . . . It is important to recall that “kurios” signified little more than recognition of superiority of one in a group, with probably a colloquial meaning so simple as “The boss.” But it came to pass that the people who accepted the new Teacher, infused it with a new significance: “the Master” and this particular Master became their hero, and they, the people of this Lord who was called Jesus—thus the Lord, Jesus and they their Lord’s or Master’s.<sup>1</sup>

In a perfection of simplicity it became clear, definite, separatistic, and thus was evolved “kuriakon,” the place where the Lord’s people would assemble for spiritual exercises in the new Teaching and life. Here is a good example of the abuse: “Harnack suggested that Priscilla and Aquilla wrote the epistle to the church which met in their house.” A reference to *Romans* xvi, 5 yields, “Greet the church that is in their house.”<sup>2</sup> And this, the true Kirk—in fact, simple Brotherhoods or fellowships—so flourished that it became the positive object of hostility in which we first hear of Paul as ringleader. The corruption of this real Church of the Holy Spirit was achieved by minds so inured to deeming themselves the sole Ecclesia, the peculiarly “called out”: so immersed in and blinded by harsh materialism that no religious system could be conceived by them as workable without it!; and alas! so it remains to this day. As will be shown, this was precisely the type to which Paul was heir; and he never outgrew it. And this was he, compared with whom Peter chosen by the Master, was a mute: Paul who never knew the Master but who used language creating the false impression that he had: who tried to usurp the place of his superiors including Peter who *had* had his commission from the Master: Paul who was in this respect “the chief of sinners.” It is this personality whom the self-“Called out” have delighted to honour as all but equal with the Master Himself. It passes amazement. It is therefore here submitted that Paul has been the chief instrument in misrepresenting what the Master taught, and for preaching what Jesus did not teach as if he

<sup>1</sup> Wyld links ‘kyrie’ with the Irish ‘Caur’—hero. *The Universal Dictionary of the English Language*: Herbert Joseph: 1936.

<sup>2</sup> F. Bertram Clogg, M.A., B.D., *An introduction to the N.T.*: University of London Press: Hodder: 1937/43.

had; for tendentiously weaving into the fabric of the New Teaching the warp and weft of his ineradicable inheritance and upbringing, and that Paul must be held responsible for much of the schism that has rent bodies of Christian people almost from his very entry on the scene. And this, successions of churchmen have deemed excellent to the place of Sainthood. But no one has had the temerity to put into the mouth of The Master anything related to Adoption, Justification, Predestination, Sanctification, the efficacy as to the shedding of blood, nor the judgment seat of Christ—all these are “Pauline inventions.”<sup>1</sup> And this has been deemed an improvement on what The Master taught!

One is reminded of Butler's hero Ernest in *The Way of all Flesh*:

“It did not occur to him that there might be a blunder anywhere, much less to try to find out where it existed. One thing did begin to loom out of the general vagueness: . . . that he was saving very few souls, whereas there were thousands being hourly lost all around him.”

Let us look at what may be found in the Acts and Epistles, aided by what Rebecca West has called the “white light of truth” rather than “the red light of emotion.” “Happy is he whom truth teaches by itself, not by figures and words, but as it is in itself” as à Kempis says in *The Imitation of Christ*.

We are introduced to Saul as the young man who “stood by, consenting” to the brutal stoning to death of Stephen. He was taking care of the clothes of the fanatics; and he must have been thinking furiously. (*Acts* vii, 55-60. viii, 1.) In chapter ix, verse 1, he is “breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord,” seeking powers for their wholesale arrest: at verse 3 begins the first account of his conversion, and it must be a shock to many to realise that there does not exist any *autobiographical* account of that. By his biographer (or biographers) there are three versions, with features in common, but differing enough to provoke comment: *Acts* ix, 3 ff: xxii, 6 ff: xxvi, 12 ff. In the first, a heavenly light shines round about him: a voice is heard: He says “Who art thou Lord?”: he gets instructions: his companions hear the voice but do not see anyone. His sight is so impaired that he has to be led to Damascus, a piteous figure, to the care of Ananias who passes on to him his commission. In the second the voice adds, “of Nazareth” to ‘Jesus’: his companions do *not* hear the voice which this time is immediately much more definite—a distinct step in the direction of the special-call claim: he is *to be told* “all things which are appointed thee to do”: is baptised, and having been healed of his blindness, sets off for Jerusalem where he arrives “in a trance.” In the third, the voice speaks in Hebrew, and it is not Ananias who gives him his commission but

<sup>1</sup> The reader is advised to read *Jesus meets Paul: a duologue in Paradise*, by the late Dr. Alexander Paterson, Medical Missionary in Hebron for 30 years. Robert. Gibson & Sons, Glasgow.



*Jesus* himself—and elaborately; thus developing the special-call. He is now before King Agrippa whom, we observe, he addresses with a suavity that does not seem in character. Of the feature in common, the most remarkable is Paul's first response to the "voice" claimed to be that of the Master. Here is a man who has made himself notorious as a persecutor of the converts to the Teaching of "Jesus": who, we are told, is addressed as such by the "voice,"—and his response is "Who art thou Lord?"! '*Who art thou Lord*'! Was the biographer, long after the event, so eager to credit his hero with an instant percipience, yet retain the dramatic element of surprise, that he allows him to demonstrate both, in four words? If Paul knew—and let it be remembered that he never met the Master—why the question as to identity? If nevertheless he was sure, why "Who?" and "Lord"? Reliability is seriously shaken.<sup>1</sup>

In the third account there is a suggestion that almost amounts to evidence that Paul did not accept his alleged commission as absolutely compelling. Peroratively, he states, "Whereupon O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision." "Not disobedient," is quite remarkably pale from one in whom modesty was not a distinguishing characteristic. If that is a mistaken deduction, the alternative is that he was suavely—or his biographer for him—writing down the activity into which he subsequently entered, towards establishing a defence. Here is a heretic-hunter who is changed in the twinkling of an eye into an advocate of the heresy. He has been surrounded by a glory of heaven from out of which speaks to him the Lord Jesus, who gives him a commission (he affirms) of superlative importance, and all he says to his judge is that he was not *disobedient*, adding a few words of admission that he had not been inactive in the new cause! How ignorant we are left as to what did in sober fact take place at the conversion, and at this examination! What may be extracted is, that he made the utmost of his apostasy. The man who a day before has been breathing out threatenings and slaughter is subdued. Nothing less than the personal appeal of "Jesus" can have achieved this in his case: nothing less than the pre-destined could be ally to such a consummation; and so sure enough we find him writing to the Galatians with the utmost assurance of when "it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace." (i, 15). It is, of course, in vain that we search for any coherent support of this; and in as far as it has any validity whatever, the same is applicable to the Disciples, Joseph of Arimathea, the centurion, and ten thousand others when the Light and Truth broke through. "The danger is" wrote Dr. Paterson (op. cit.), "that fanaticism is so easily transferred to a new belief." And this takes

<sup>1</sup> It is very interesting to find Moffat making a marginal note as to his omission of 'Lord'. He says he has "deliberately" left the Greek word untranslated because "any English rendering would imply either too little or too much."

us to the first fanaticism. In his essay on "St. Paul," Dean Inge wrote of him:

"He was well educated because he was the son of a strict Jew. A child in such a home would learn by heart large pieces of the Old Testament, and at the Synagogue school, all the minutiae of the Jewish Law. The pupil was not allowed to write anything down: all was committed to memory which in consequence became extremely retentive. . . . Under Gamaliel's tuition the young Pharisee would learn to be a 'strong churchman'. The Rabbis viewed everything from an ecclesiastical standpoint. The interests of the Priesthood, the Altar, and the Temple overshadowed everything else. . . . Probably he meant to be a Jerusalem Rabbi, still practising his trade, as Rabbis usually did."<sup>1</sup>

Foakes-Jackson refers to Paul as a dealer in leather with business interests which he did not neglect on his journeys, and seems to indicate that Priscilla and Aquilla had kindred interests.<sup>2</sup>

Barnes wrote:

"Paul was in many ways a typical Jew, given the name of Saul as was natural as he belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. But in Greek 'Saulos' meant, waddling: the gait of the tortoise, and had other less creditable associations. So Saul changed his name . . . for the more aristocratic appellation of 'Paul'. It was usual for students of Jewish Law to have a trade. Paul learned that of tent-maker."<sup>3</sup>

W. L. Wilmshurst, that unusual combination of a man of Law and a Mystic, in his too little-known work *Contemplations* wrote that:

"'Saul' implies gross ignorance of Divine things, while 'Paul', the latinised form of the Greek divinity, Apollo, is the Light-bringer."<sup>4</sup>

We have seen this young man standing by, consenting to the murder of a Christian, and in a small degree co-operating. We have seen him thinking furiously. On this Inge wrote:

"The author of the Epistles was certainly not a man who could watch a young saint being battered to death by howling fanatics and not feel any emotion. Stephen's speech may have made him indignant: his heroic death . . . must have wakened very different feelings. . . . His bigotry as a persecutor sustained him for a few weeks. But, how if he could himself see what the dying Stephen saw! The vision came in the desert where men see visions and hear voices to this day. They were common when

<sup>1</sup> *Outspoken Essays*: Longmans: 1921.      <sup>2</sup> Muffat's N.T. Commentary.

<sup>3</sup> *The Rise of Christianity*: The late E. W. Barnes, D.D.: Longmans: 1947.

<sup>4</sup> The change is made without comment—Acts XIII, 9—when he denounces Elymas the sorcerer, and—in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ—we must presume—strikes him blind. It is further written: "Then the deputy (Sergius Paulus) when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord". Barnes rejects this as "not sober history" in which we may well pray he was right, but sober or not, there it is, the Word of God as found in the Acts of the Apostles, appointed to be read in the Churches.

Marco Polo traversed it. . . . He suffered from some obscure physical trouble . . . probably epilepsy, a disease which is compatible with great powers of endurance and mental energy, as is proved by the cases of Julius Caesar and Napoleon. He was liable to mystical trances," though in Paul's case they were rare. "At that time anyone who underwent a physical experience for which he could not account, believed that he was possessed by a spirit, good or bad."

Barnes opines that "there is no need to associate Paul's great experience with an epileptic attack: . . . Paul's own language corresponded to the strangely confused background of his upbringing. In his letters he makes perplexing statements. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the more closely experts study his writings, the more difficult of interpretation do they find them."<sup>1</sup>

So very much has been made of the Conversion, that it is important to try to discover what did in fact take place. Under examination, certainty gives way. It has been common to attribute *Acts* to Paul's friend, Luke the physician. Inge sees two hands in it: one who wrote the Petrine and one the Pauline part. He favours Luke as the writer but adds: "It does not necessarily follow that he was the fellow-traveller who, in a few places speaks of himself in the first person."<sup>2</sup> Barnes<sup>3</sup> discussing the authorship of *Luke* and *Acts* says "Undoubtedly the author of *Acts* used a travel-diary kept by a companion of Paul," (there are the famous "we" passages) and he does not see any reason to "doubt the ancient tradition that the author of the travel-diary was Luke 'the beloved physician.' Was he also the author of the book of *Acts*? or had that author, among other authorities (*sic*) which he consulted, used that travel-diary?" He argues that if Luke was thirty years of age in A.D. 48 (when heard of at Troas) he must have been near or quite eighty when he wrote the Third Gospel and *Acts*.<sup>4</sup> "Where it" the (later and larger half of *Acts*) "is based on a diary kept by a travelling companion it is undoubtedly good history of its kind (*sic*). But the book . . . as we have reason to believe, was written more than sixty years after the crucifixion of Jesus. Its early information as to Paul is not always easy to reconcile with that given in *Galatians* and elsewhere, and . . . we must sharply distinguish such information from facts to be regarded as certain. This caution applies to statements contained in the long speeches attributed to Paul."<sup>5</sup> As to this warning, Inge tells us<sup>6</sup> "The Greek historian invented speeches for his principal characters. This was a conventional way (*sic*) of elucidating the situation for the benefit of his readers." Barnes further argues that<sup>7</sup> as Paul's letters were in great probability not collected, edited, and put into general circulation before the second

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> Inge *op. cit.* p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes *op. cit.* p. 113.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.* p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> *op. cit.* p. 196.

<sup>6</sup> Inge *op. cit.* p. 208.

<sup>7</sup> Barnes *op. cit.* p. 116.

Century, the author of *Acts* probably never heard of them," (*sic*) and this would account for his silence as to their existence. "Had the physician Luke written *Acts*, the silence would . . . have been inexplicable." Barnes's conclusion is: "He will have been a well-educated Christian of the second generation, who had laboriously acquired such information as he could of the early Christian movement, and who wrote nearly forty years after Paul had perished at Rome."<sup>1</sup>

Of *Acts*, Foakes-Jackson wrote:

"Even if its accuracy is questioned (*sic*) it is the only source we have. . . . The attribution of *Luke* and *Acts* to the same author or compiler generally agreed, is comparatively late and cannot be—any more than the Gospels of Matthew and Mark—traced to Apostolic times. . . . Luke stored up all the oral traditions he could collect and—we gather from his preface—that he had written sources at his disposal."<sup>2</sup>

Another touch as to authenticity is yielded by Barnes. "We have also to remember that our author, whoever he may have been, was a great literary artist who may well have been too easy-going to make a change from 'we' to 'they', while to the style of the narrative he gave characteristic touches. When in his gospel he used *Mark*, he dexterously put the imprint of his own style upon the passages which he quoted."<sup>3</sup> And finally "We conclude then that the third Gospel and *Acts* were written about A.D. 100 by a well-educated man, otherwise unknown, who collected such records as he could acquire. He wrote with brilliance and skill, though at times he used his material with undue freedom . . . and was occasionally careless in quoting from information to which he had access."<sup>4</sup>

And thus we discover that so much accepted as authentic and promulgated as The Word of God, relies on a manuscript by an unknown cultured gentleman, who took liberties with his matter, and wrote about half a century after the events, based on notes made by another person who was probably much inclined to enhance, where and when he could, the behaviour of his friend.

As to the conversion, all that we can be certain of is that this young man from Tarsus was the subject of an experience the nature of which eludes determination, from which he emerged—or was later presented as emerging—making asseverative claims as to his having become a chosen vessel. Beyond this, there is no evidence such as a court of enquiry would require on matters much less important in order to win its seal.

*To be completed.*

<sup>1</sup> *op. cit.* p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.* p. 114.

<sup>2</sup> Moffatt's New Testament Commentary.

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.* p. 116.

**John Wm. Rattray**, a layman of Dundee, has contributed "The Wavering Balance" to Vol. 6, Pt. I. and "The Hollow Oaks" to Vol. 7, Pt. I.



REVIEW: *The Scarecrow Christ, and other Poems*, by Elder Olson.  
Noonday Press, 17 Union Square, New York 3, N.Y. \$3.00.

## E. SHIRVELL PRICE

HERE is authentic poetry, direct, pungent, disciplined and, at times, sublime. It is Mr. Olson's third book of published poems and adds greatly to his repute as a poet. As critic, his exposition in *The Poetry of Dylan Thomas* has won him high esteem in England as well as in America. We have met Mr. Olson, as a member of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago. Our impression was of quiet strength and simplicity through depth, matched with a most sensitive perception in the realm of Spiritual imagery. He sings of man, his suffering and frustrated state and of his redemption, though never in the effete theologic mode of orthodoxy. The title poem witnesses to this:

O what is that on its knees  
And what is that in darkling air?  
A hanged man there?  
No, no:

Anybody could,  
Anyone can  
With a rag or two and a cross of wood  
Make an image of man:  
It is a scarecrow.

"If for insulted suffering  
Other suffering may atone,  
Lie easy on your cross of wood,  
I perish on my cross of bone." . . .

And the long winter of Eden ends,  
And Christ lies easy on his Cross,  
And the Cross turns into a Tree.

And in the closing lines of "Crucifix":

Think of this, gaze your fill on it, then remember  
It is the Christ that sanctifies the Cross,  
Not the Cross, Christ; and remember, it is not  
Pre-eminence in pain that makes the Christ  
(For the thieves as well were crucified)  
No, but the Godhead; the untouchable unguessable unsuffering  
Immortality beyond mortality,  
Which feigns our mortality as this silver feigns it,  
And of which we are ignorant as that multitude;  
For the pain comes from the humanity; the pain we know;  
The agony we comprehend; of the rest, know nothing.

But there are other riches: the shortest poem of all: "On an Adagio by Beethoven":

Weep, intransigent mourner, weep,  
Weep, and spurn all comforting;  
Bitter is the fate of man,  
Nor is it altered by your woe;  
But sorrow being ennobled so,  
And salt tears to such sweetness wrought,  
The angels doomed to Paradise  
Envy us our suffering.

The poem "Ice-Age" is a most powerfully sustained memorial of the war, beginning: Winter fell on Europe. The snow sifted, . . .

Some may find greater riches in the poems which have no obvious religious reference, but throughout we discern a Humanist perception which engulfs and transcends the traditional Christian. Witness the closing stanza of "The Christmas Meditation":

And what if somewhere now in an ancient town,  
As all this ringing metal prophesies,  
There be enacted that most ancient play  
Of a god's agony in a human guise?  
It matters nothing: gods in changeless skies  
Serve but to regulate the night and day  
And the stars' circling; it is man's blood alone  
Suffices both to err and to atone.

This, and much more, is not only authentic poetry: it is authentic religion.

We trust that Mr. Olson's verse may become more easily available to us in England. It should now be widely read and appreciated in America.

#### EDITORIAL NOTE ON DISTRIBUTION AND POLICY

The Editor's recent four month's visit to the U.S.A. and Canada has resulted in an encouraging increase of some 350 new subscribers. These include a number of Universalists, and, as the Unitarian and Universalist Churches move towards union under the Council of Liberal Churches of America, we may look for further support from this source. The new accession of readers means that, in geographical distribution, the numbers of subscribers in Great Britain and America are just about equal. If we take into consideration the smaller but important number of readers in Europe (mostly I.A.R.F. members and Unitarians behind the Iron Curtain) and those elsewhere round the globe, then there are more copies going to addresses overseas than to addresses in these islands.

This change in the balance of distribution does not, of itself, call for any change in editorial policy but our perception of what is happening in the advance of Liberal Religion in America calls for much more clarification of the function of Liberal Religion in the world to-day. The functions and the needs of man and a deepening of our confidence in the principles we avow must have greater emphasis in this Journal, as a continual preface and stimulus to action in the future.

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## ANTICIPATIONS

Forthcoming issues of *Faith and Freedom* will contain articles from amongst the following:

JOSIAH R. BARTLETT  
The Liberal Doctrine of Man

FRANK A. BULLOCK  
The Crisis in Culture

DR. FRITZ BURI  
Sin and Reconciliation: The Basic Concepts of a  
Theological Doctrine of Man

JOHN RUSKIN CLARK  
Ambiguity of Roles in the Liberal Ministry

COLIN GIBSON  
The Teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God

ROWLAND GRAY-SMITH  
Christian Humility

A. P. HEWITT  
The Validity of the Knowledge of God

LLEWELLYN JONES  
Grundtvig versus Kierkegaard

CLARK KUCHEMAN  
Automation, Society and the Liberal Christian Tradition

E. G. LEE  
Symbol and Reality

DR. GEORGE MARCHAL  
The Symbol in Schweitzer

PROFESSOR J. E. OWEN  
Rationalism Re-examined

HAROLD PICTON  
We and Our Universe

DR. ED. PLATZHOFF-LEJEUNE  
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